

THE NUTCRACKER



OF NUREMBERG

Alexandre Dumas

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THE NUTCRACKER
OF NUREMBERG



THE NUTCRACKER OF NUREMBERG

by ALEXANDRE DUMAS père

WITH A PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR



Illustrated with Silhouettes cut by

ELSE HASSELRIIS

Translated by

GRACE GINGRAS

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THE NUTCRACKER OF NUREMBERG

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PART I

THE STORY OF THE NUTCRACKER
OF NUREMBERG

PART II

THE STORY OF THE NUT KRAKATUK
AND THE PRINCESS PIRLIPATE

PART III

THE STORY OF MARIE
AND THE KING OF THE TOYS

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The illustrations in silhouette were cut by Else Hasselriis of Copenhagen, Denmark, the artist who has revived this half-forgotten art in Europe. Guiding her keen-bladed little scissors outward from the center of the black paper she creates a new and charming world for us. Her skill lends another dimension to the black paper, yet the restrained treatment leaves many delightful, shadowy details to the imagination.



PREFACE

WHEREIN WE ARE TOLD BY THE AUTHOR HOW HE WAS
INDUCED TO RELATE THE TALE OF THE NUTCRACKER OF
NUREMBERG

There was a large children's party at the home of my friend Count M—— and I had helped to increase the noisy and joyous assemblage by escorting my small daughter thither. I must confess that after a half hour during which I had taken part in four or five successive games of Blind Man's Buff, Hot Cockles and Drop the Handkerchief, my head grew so weary from the din created by twenty or so charming little demons of eight to ten years, each trying to out-shout the other, that I slipped away from the salon in search of a certain small room of my acquaintance, sound-proof and well hidden. Here I hoped to resume the train of my interrupted ideas. My retreat had to be maneuvered by means of craft as well as good luck. I had to escape not only the notice of the young guests, which was not very difficult considering their concentration on the games, but also that of the parents which was quite another matter. Successfully reaching the longed-for boudoir I discovered that it had been transformed for the occasion into a refectory and that large buffets had been arranged there laden with pastries and refreshments of all kinds. However, these

gastronomic preparations seemed to me only a fresh guarantee that I would not be disturbed before the supper hour. My eye happened to fall upon an enormous armchair with upholstered back and arms. It would have been called a "lazy one" in Italy, that country of true idlers. I disposed myself luxuriously in it, ravished at the idea of an hour alone with my thoughts—a rare experience in the midst of this constant turmoil in which we servants of the public live.

Either through fatigue or my unusual state of well-being, I soon fell sound asleep. I do not know how much time passed while I was lost to all going on about me but suddenly I was awakened by loud bursts of laughter. My haggard eyes opened slowly to see above them nothing more alarming than a delightful ceiling by Boucher, strewn with cupids and doves. I attempted to get up but the effort was in vain as I found myself bound to the armchair as securely as was Gulliver on the bank of Lilliput. I saw at once the disadvantages of my position. Surprised on the enemy's territory, I was now a prisoner of war. In my situation there was nothing for it but to play the part staunchly and negotiate amicably for my freedom.

My first proposition was to escort the conquerors on the following day to Felix the caterer and to put his entire shop at their disposal. Unfortunately the moment was ill-chosen; I was addressing an audience which listened to me, mouths stuffed with plum cake and hands full of little pastries. This suggestion was haughtily re-

pulsed. Then I offered to bring together the whole honorable company the next day in any garden of their choice and there set off fireworks composed of any number of skyrockets and Roman candles which the spectators should agree upon. This offer gained some favor with the small boys but the girls opposed it in a body, declaring themselves horribly afraid of fireworks, their nerves unable to endure the noise of explosives, and the odor of the powder most distressing to them. I was about to offer a third suggestion when I heard a small flute-like voice murmuring these words which made me tremble, "Ask Papa, who makes up tales, to tell us a fairy story." I tried to protest but my voice was drowned out by cries of: "Oh, yes, a story, a story, we want a story!"

"But, children," I cried with all my might, "you ask me the most difficult thing in the world—a story. How you go on! Ask me for the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid* and I should submit, but a fairy story—a plague on it! Perrault is quite a different person from Homer, Virgil or Le Tasse, and Hop-o'-my-thumb a creation as distinctly original as Achilles, Turnus or Renaud."

"We do not want an epic!" cried the children in one voice. "We want a story!"

"But, my little friends—"

"There is no 'but'; we want a story! We want a story! We want a story!" All the voices spoke in chorus with an emphasis which admitted of no reply.

"Very well then," I replied, sighing, "a fairy story it is."

"Ah, that is good," said my persecutors.

"But I warn you of one thing. The story which I am about to tell is not by me."

"What does that matter provided we like it?"

I confess to a little humiliation at the lack of enthusiasm shown by my audience for an original work.

"And by whom is this story, Monsieur?" said a young voice, belonging probably to an organism more inquisitive than the rest.

"It is by Hoffman, Mademoiselle; do you know Hoffman?"

"No, Monsieur, I do not know him."

"What is it called, your story?" demanded the son of the house in the confident tone of one who feels he has the right to ask.

"The Nutcracker of Nuremberg," I replied in all humility. "The title pleases you, does it not, my dear Henri?"

"Hum! It does not promise anything, that title; but no matter, get started. If you bore us we will stop you and you will have to tell us another, and so on, I warn you, until you find one that we like."

"One moment, one moment; I do not agree to that. If you were grown-ups—well and good."

"Nevertheless, those are our conditions; otherwise you are a prisoner for keeps."

"My dear Henri, you are a charming child, admirably brought up, and it will astound me greatly if

you do not become some day a statesman of distinction. Untie me and I shall do all that you want."

"Word of honor?"

"Word of honor!"

At once I felt the many cords which held me loosen. Each child had taken a hand in liberating me and I was soon free. Then, since one's word must always be kept, especially where children are concerned, I invited my hearers to seat themselves comfortably so that they might slip easily from listening into slumber. When the last one was settled I began as follows:

THE NUTCRACKER
OF NUREMBERG

PART I

*The Story of the Nutcracker
of Nuremberg*

GODFATHER DROSSELMAYER

In the city of Nuremberg lived a much respected Chief Justice called President Silberhaus, which means "house of silver." He had two children, a nine-year-old boy, Fritz, and a daughter Marie who was seven and a half years old. They were both very attractive children but so different in appearance and nature that one would never have taken them for brother and sister. Fritz was a fine big boy, chubby, blustering and frolicsome, stamping his foot at the least opposition, convinced that all things in this world were created for his pleasure and whims. He would continue in this conviction until his father, irritated by the shouting and stamping, would emerge from his study and lifting the index finger of his right hand to the level of his frowning eyebrow, would remark: "Monsieur *Fritz!*"

Then Fritz would want to sink under the floor.

As to his mother, it goes without saying that no matter how high she raised her finger or even her hand, Fritz paid not the slightest attention.

Marie, on the other hand, was a delicate pale child, with long curling ringlets falling over her little shoulders like a moving sheaf of gold. She was modest, sweet, affable, sympathetic to all troubles even those of her dolls,

obedient to the slightest sign from her mother and never gave trouble to Mademoiselle Trüdchen, the governess. Consequently, everyone loved Marie.

Now, in the year 17— came the twenty-fourth day of December. You may not know, my dears, that the twenty-fourth of December is the day before Christmas, that being the day when the Infant Jesus was born in a manger between a donkey and a cow. I must now explain one thing to you.

The most ill-informed ones among you have heard it said that each country has its customs; (the best-informed ones doubtless know already that) Nuremberg is a German city renowned for its toys, dolls and polichinelles,* which are sent in well-filled cases to all the countries of the world. The children of Nuremberg therefore should be the happiest children on earth. At least they are not like the inhabitants of Ostend who have an abundance of oysters only to see them wasted. Thus Germany, quite a different country from France, has likewise different customs. In France, the first day of the New Year is the day for exchanging presents. In Germany the gift day is the twenty-fourth of December, that is to say, the night before Christmas. Across the Rhine gifts are given in this way: a large tree is installed on a low table in the living-room and its branches are hung with toys. Those too large for the branches are put on the table; then the children are reminded that the good little Jesus has given them some of the presents which he received from the three wise kings. This is not

* Puppets resembling the English Punch.



"MONSIEUR FRITZ!"

wholly untrue because you know it is from the Infant Jesus that all good things of this world come.

I do not need to tell you that among the fortunate children of Nuremberg, I mean those who at Christmas receive many toys of all kinds, were the little boy and girl of President Silberhaus. Besides their parents who adored them, they had a godfather called Godfather Drosselmayer who adored them also. I must describe briefly this illustrious personage who occupied in the City of Nuremberg a position almost as distinguished as that of President Silberhaus. Godfather Drosselmayer, Medical Commissioner, was not at all a good-looking fellow; far from it. He was a tall, spare man, about five feet, eight inches high. He was so round-shouldered and stooped that in spite of his long limbs he could pick up a handkerchief without seeming to bend over. His face was like a wrinkled apple touched by April frost. In the place of his right eye was a large black plaster; he was perfectly bald, a drawback which was offset by a luxuriant and curly wig, an ingenious work of his own, made of spun glass. On account of this remarkable head-covering he always carried his hat under his arm. The one remaining eye, however, was alive and brilliant, seeming to perform the functions of its missing comrade as well as its own, so rapidly did it make the rounds of a room wherein Godfather Drosselmayer wished to take in all details at one glance, or focus itself steadily upon people whose inmost thoughts he desired to know. Godfather Drosselmayer, through the study of men and

animals, had become familiar with all the resources of machinery so that he made men who walked, saluted, presented arms; women who danced, played the harpsichord and the violin; dogs which fetched, carried and barked; birds which flew, hopped and sang; fish which swam and ate. He had finally succeeded in making dolls and polichinelles pronounce in a harsh and monotonous voice a few words, simple ones it is true, like papa and mamma. Nevertheless, in spite of all these dubious attempts, Godfather Drosselmayer did not despair but insisted that some day he would succeed in making real men, women, dogs, birds and fish. It goes without saying that his two godchildren, to whom he had promised his first experiments in this field, were always full of pleasant anticipations.

You can clearly see that Godfather Drosselmayer's mechanical skill made him a very useful friend. When a clock got out of order in the house of President Silberhaus and in spite of attempts on the part of ordinary clockmakers its hands ceased indicating the hour, its *tick tock* subsided, its movement stopped, they sent for the godfather. He would arrive on a run, having, like all true artists, a real affection for his hobby. Taken to the lifeless timepiece he would lift out the movement and place it between his knees. Then, tongue sticking out, his one eye glowing like a carbuncle, his glass wig on the floor beside him, he would draw from his pocket a collection of miscellaneous small instruments made by himself for purposes known only to himself, choose the



GODFATHER DROSSELMAYER

sharpest ones and plunge them into the clock. This operation, while it worried Marie who could not believe that the clock did not suffer, nevertheless restored the patient so that, once replaced in its case, it would begin to stir and strike more beautifully than ever. Then the room appeared to live once more.

On one occasion, touched by the coaxing of Marie, who was sadly watching their dog as he laboriously turned the kitchen spit, Godfather Drosselmayer had condescended, from the heights of his scientific knowledge, to make an automatic dog. Thereafter, Turk, sensitive to the cold, after three years of working so near the fire, warmed his nose and paws before the blaze like a veritable gentleman with nothing to do but watch his successor who, once started, would keep at his task indefinitely. After the President, his wife, Fritz and Marie, Turk was certainly the member of the household who most loved and venerated Godfather Drosselmayer. He made a great fuss every time he saw him arrive, announcing by joyous barks and the wagging of his tail that the quaint old man was near even before he touched the knocker.

On this Christmas Eve just as dusk was falling Fritz and Marie, who had not been allowed in the salon, were sitting in one corner of the dining-room. While Made-moiselle Trüdchen, their governess, was knitting near the window to catch the last rays of sun, the children were seized with a sort of vague uneasiness because the lights had not yet been brought in. They were speaking in

low voices to each other as people do when a little frightened.

"Fritz," said Marie, "surely mother and father are busy with the Christmas tree for ever since morning I have been hearing things being moved about in the salon."

"Yes," said Fritz, "and about ten minutes ago I realized from the way Turk was barking that Godfather was coming."

"Oh, gracious!" cried Marie, clapping her hands, "what do you suppose that the good godfather will bring us? I think it will be a beautiful garden all planted with trees, along which will run a lovely river, its grassy banks bordered with flowers. On this river, maybe there will be silver swans with golden collars and a young girl feeding them marzipan which they will eat out of her apron."

"In the first place," said Fritz in the superior tone peculiar to him, which his parents regarded as one of his gravest faults, "you should know, Miss Marie, that swans do not eat marzipan."

"I believe you," said Marie, "but as you are a year and a half older than I you ought to know more about such things."

Fritz swaggered a bit and resumed: "I think I can say that if Godfather Drosselmayer brings anything it will be a fortress with soldiers to guard, cannons to defend, and enemies to attack it. There will be splendid battles."

"I do not like battles," said Marie. "If he brings a



THEN, TONGUE STICKING OUT, HIS ONE EYE GLOWING, HE WOULD
WORK ON THE CLOCK

fortress, as you think, it will be for you; except that I want to nurse the wounded ones."

"Whatever he brings," said Fritz, "you know that it will be neither for you nor for me, because, with the excuse that his presents are true works of art, they will be taken away as soon as we get them and put on the top shelf of the big glass cupboard which even father can reach only by standing on a chair. That is why I like our other toys better than those that Godfather Drosselmayer brings. We can have them to play with at least until they are broken."

"Yes, I do too," replied Marie, "only it is not necessary to repeat this to Godfather."

"Why?"

"Because it would hurt his feelings to know that we do not like his toys as well as the others. He thinks they make us happy. We must not let him know that he is mistaken."

"Oh, bah!" said Fritz.

"Miss Marie is right, Master Fritz," said Mademoiselle Trüdchen, who ordinarily kept silent, only speaking when she felt the occasion demanded it.

"See here," said Marie in an animated tone to prevent Fritz from replying rudely to the governess, "let us try to guess what we will get. I have confided to mother that Mademoiselle Rose, my doll, is getting more and more awkward in spite of my constant scoldings, and keeps falling on her nose. As this never happens without leaving disagreeable traces, it is impossible to take

her out any more; her face goes so badly with her pretty clothes."

"I have reminded father," said Fritz, "that a big chestnut horse would be fine in my stable. I told him, too, that there can be no well-organized army without light cavalry and that I need a squadron of hussars to complete my division."

At this point Mademoiselle Trüdchen considered it time to speak again. "Monsieur Fritz and Mademoiselle Marie," she said, "you know very well that it is the Infant Jesus who gives and blesses all these beautiful toys. Do not choose in advance what you want. He knows best what will be most likely to please you."

"Oh, yes," said Fritz, "but just the same last year I only got infantry when, as I have just said, a squadron of hussars is much more to my liking."

"I have to thank him," said Marie, "because I only asked for one doll and I got besides a pretty white dove with pink toes and beak."

Meanwhile night had come on. The children's voices sank lower and lower. Suddenly they seemed to feel around them the joyous beating wings of their guardian angels and to hear in the distance a soft melodious music like the tones of an organ. A bright light passed over the wall and Fritz and Marie understood that it was the Infant Jesus who, having left their toys in the salon, was flying away on a golden cloud to other children who were waiting for him as anxiously as they. At the same time a bell rang, the door opened noisily and such a light



MARIE, FRITZ AND MADEMOISELLE TRÜDCHEN WAITED
IN THE DINING-ROOM

burst from the salon that the children stood dazed, able to say only "Ah! Ah! Ah!" The President and his wife appeared on the threshold of the door and took Fritz and Marie by the hand. "Come, little ones," they said, "see what the Infant Jesus has just brought you." The children rushed into the living-room and Mademoiselle Trüdchen, leaving her knitting on a nearby chair, followed them.

✓ THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Imagine, my dears, those two great caterers to youth and happiness, Susse and Groux, taking you into their marvelous shops and saying, as they offer you an unlimited credit: "Come, choose, take." Then you stop, breathless, wide-eyed, open-mouthed, and you have a moment of ecstasy that will never come again in your lives. It was like this with Fritz and Marie when they entered the salon and saw the Christmas tree apparently growing out of the table. It was covered with a white cloth and loaded with oranges, candied flowers, sugar-plums and burnt almonds. Everything was gleaming in the light of a hundred candles hidden in the foliage which gave a startling effect. (At this sight Fritz danced a few measures in a manner which did honor to his teacher, while Marie did not even try to hold back two large tears of joy which rolled over her bright face like liquid

pearls on a May rose.) It was, however, much more exciting when the two children saw the table covered with toys of all sorts. Marie found a doll twice as large as Mademoiselle Rose and a charming little silk dress hung on a peg in such a way that she could walk around it and inspect it from all sides. Fritz discovered on the table a squadron of hussars uniformed in gold-trimmed red cloaks and mounted on white horses. At the foot of the table was tethered the famous chestnut whose absence had made such a great void in Fritz's stable. Then, like a modern Alexander, he immediately mounted the shining Bucephalus which was waiting for him all saddled and bridled. After having galloped three or four times around the Christmas tree he declared, dismounting, that although his was a very wild and restless animal, he felt capable of conquering him so that within a month he would be as gentle as a lamb. He had scarcely dismounted, however, and Marie had just christened her new doll Mademoiselle Clarchen, which in French means Claire, when the silvery sound of a bell rang out once more. The children turned in the direction of the sound and saw something which had completely escaped them before, so taken up had they been by the shining Christmas tree. In a corner of the salon was a Chinese screen from behind which issued the sound of music indicating that a new and unusual surprise was in store for the children. They remembered then that they had not yet seen the Commissioner and with one voice they cried out, "Oh! Godfather Drosselmayer!"

5 x 2 1/2 x 1 1/2 p 10



THE CHRISTMAS TREE WAS APPARENTLY GROWING
OUT OF THE TABLE

As if only waiting for this exclamation, the screen folded back and revealed not only Godfather Drosselmayer but a magnificent house with quantities of windows, rising up from a green, flower-studded lawn. Two beautiful gilded towers rose from its wings. From within the house came a sound of bells, the doors and windows opened and the children saw emerging from the rooms which were lighted with half-inch candles, many little men and women; the former were magnificently attired in embroidered coats and silk trousers, each with his sword at his side and his hat under his arm; the little women splendidly dressed in brocaded dresses with large paniers, their hair dressed high, using their fans as if overcome by the heat. In the central salon which almost seemed on fire because of a crystal chandelier blazing with candles, a throng of children danced to the music of the bells. At the same time a man in a fur coat, evidently a person of some importance, appeared repeatedly in the window of the next room. A godfather Drosselmayer, scarcely three inches high but unmistakable in his long yellow coat, patch over one eye and glass wig, went in and out as if to invite the strollers to enter his house.

At first the children were filled with surprise and delight. But after a few minutes Fritz, who had been lost in thought, his elbows on the table, rose and advanced impatiently.

"But, Godfather Drosselmayer," he said, "why do you always go in and out by the same door? Why not

come out by that door yonder and go in by this one?" And he indicated with his finger the doors in the two gilded towers.

"That cannot be done," replied Godfather Drosselmayer.

"Then," said Fritz, "please go up the stairway and change places with the man in the fur coat."

"Impossible, dear Fritz."

"Well, then, the children have danced enough; they should take a stroll while the others dance."

"But you are unreasonable, always wanting more!" cried the godfather who was becoming annoyed. "As the mechanism is made, so it has to go."

"Anyway, then," said Fritz, "I should like to go into the house."

"Now, this time," said his father, "you are crazy; you can see that it is impossible to go into the house since the weather vanes on the highest towers reach scarcely to your shoulder."

Fritz saw the logic of this and was silent for a minute until, noticing that the little men and women walked about continually, the children kept on dancing and the man in the fur coat still appeared and disappeared at regular intervals, while little Godfather Drosselmayer never left his door, he said in a disappointed tone:

"Godfather, if those little figures can only do the same thing over and over you can take them back tomorrow for I do not care about them. My horse goes wherever I want him to and my hussars can march to

the right or left, forward or backward. They are not shut up in a house and I like them better than all these poor little folks who always have to walk the same way." He turned his back on Godfather Drosselmayer and his house and rushing toward the table began to arrange his squadron of hussars in battle formation. Marie had also turned away. The monotonous movement of all the little dolls bored her, too. However, like the charming child she was, she said nothing for fear of hurting the Commissioner's feelings. Fritz's back was scarcely turned when Godfather Drosselmayer said to the President and his wife:

"Well, well, such a thing is really not for children. I am going to pack up my chateau and take it away." Madame Silberhaus, however, went over to him and in an effort to cover up Fritz's rudeness, she insisted that he explain the mechanism to her in detail. She praised the complicated parts so enthusiastically that she finally succeeded in dispelling Herr Drosselmayer's bad temper and he drew from the pockets of his long yellow coat a lot of little men and women with brown skins, white eyes and gilded feet and hands. In addition to their charm these little people had a delicious odor since they were made of stick cinnamon.

At this point Mademoiselle Trüdchen called Marie, offering to help her into the pretty little silk frock which had entranced her so much when she entered the room. But Marie, in spite of her customary politeness, did not answer Mademoiselle, so occupied was she with a new

person whom she had just discovered among the toys and on whom, my dear children, I beg you to concentrate all your attention for he is the principal hero of this very true story in which Mademoiselle Trüdchen, Marie, Fritz, the President, his wife and even Godfather Drosselmayer are only minor characters.

THE LITTLE MAN WITH THE WOODEN CAPE

Marie, as we said, did not answer Mademoiselle Trüdchen because she had just discovered a new toy.

While making his squadrons turn, twist and vault, Fritz had uncovered a charming little man leaning in a quiet and mannerly fashion against the trunk of the Christmas tree, waiting his turn to be noticed. Something should be said concerning the appearance of this little fellow whom perhaps we were over-hasty in dubbing charming. Besides the fact that his body was too long and developed out of proportion to his little thin legs, he had a head of such great size that it seemed far too large for his body. However, if there were defects in his person they were over-balanced by the excellence of his attire which bespoke a man of education and taste. He wore a long high-collared coat of violet velvet, heavily braided, with gold buttons, trousers to match and the most charming little boots, the equal of which had never been seen on the feet of anyone. They fitted

so closely that they might have been painted on. However, there were two things which seemed strange about a person who appeared to have such superior taste in dress. One was an ugly and narrow little cape of wood like a pig-tail which was attached below the nape of his neck and fell down to the middle of his back. The other was a small shabby mountaineer's cap set on his head. Gazing at these two objects which contrasted so strangely with the rest of the costume, Marie remembered that Godfather Drosselmayer himself wore over his long yellow coat a small collar which was no more in keeping than the little man's wooden cape; also that he covered his head at times with an ugly cap; all of which did not prevent him from being an excellent godfather. (She even went so far as to tell herself that if the Commissioner should copy exactly the costume of the little man with the wooden cape he would lack much of being as pleasing and gracious as he.

One may guess that all these reflections had not been made without a careful scrutiny of the little fellow to whom she had given her friendship at sight. The more she studied him the more Marie sensed the gentleness and kindness expressed in his features; his slightly prominent, light green eyes radiated only serenity and benevolence. The curly white cotton beard which covered his chin became him unusually well in that it enhanced the cheery smile on his bright red lips. After considering him with increasing affection for more than ten minutes without daring to touch him, "Oh!" cried the little girl, "tell

me, Father, who is to have this dear little fellow leaning there against the Christmas tree?"

"No one in particular," replied the President, "you and Fritz."

"I do not understand you, Father dear, how can that be?"

X "He will work for both of you," said her father, "for from now on his duty is to crack nuts for you and Fritz. He belongs to one as much as the other."

✓ (While speaking, the President had picked the little fellow up carefully and lifted the narrow wooden cape causing his mouth to open and disclose two rows of white and pointed teeth.) Then Marie, at her father's suggestion, stuffed a nut inside the mouth and *knac! knac!* the little chap cracked the nut with so much skill that the broken shell fell in a thousand pieces and the kernel was left intact in Marie's hand. She understood then that this natty little man was a descendant of the ancient and respected race of (*casse-noisettes*) (nutcrackers), whose origin, as ancient as that of the City of Nuremberg, has been lost in the shadows of time. He was carrying on the honorable and helpful profession of his ancestors. Delighted at this discovery, she began to jump for joy. The President, watching her, said, "Very well, my good little Marie, since the nutcracker pleases you so much I am going to give him into your charge although he belongs equally to you both." He handed the little man to Marie who took him into her arms and set him to work at once. She was considerate enough to pick out only the



THEN MARIE STUFFED A NUT INSIDE

smallest nuts so that her protégé would not be forced to open his mouth unduly, which not only did not become him but gave him a ridiculous expression. Then Made-moiselle Trüdchen came up to enjoy the sight of the little fellow performing his chores which he did graciously and cheerfully.

Meanwhile, Fritz, training his chestnut horse and maneuvering his hussars, had heard the *knac! knac! knac!* and after the twentieth repetition it dawned on him that something new was going on. Turning his large inquisitive eyes to where his father and Mademoiselle Trüdchen were standing, he caught sight of the little man with the wooden cape in the arms of his sister. He dismounted from the horse without even leading him back to the stable, rushed over to Marie and, roaring with laughter at the grotesque grimaces made by the little man when he opened his large mouth, claimed his turn, as part owner, to direct the cracking process. In spite of his sister's objections, he picked out such large hard nuts to stuff into the little man's mouth that after the fifteenth or sixteenth nut came a sudden "carrac!" and three small teeth fell from the little fellow's gums while his jaw dropped instantly, weak and quivering like that of an old, old man.

"Oh, my poor nutcracker!" cried Marie, snatching him from Fritz's hand.

"What a stupid idiot!" cried the boy. "He wants to be a nutcracker and he has a jaw of glass. He is an impostor who does not know his job. Give him to me, Marie; he has got to keep on cracking even if he should

lose the rest of his teeth and break his jaw entirely. Why are you so interested in this lazy fellow, anyway?"

"No, no, no!" cried Marie, hugging the nutcracker closely. "No, you shall not have him any longer. See how sadly he looks at me, showing me his poor wounded jaw. You are a cruel boy. You whip your horses and the other day you had one of your soldiers shot!"

"I whip my horses when they are balky," replied Fritz with his most blustering air. "As to the soldier I ordered shot, he was a miserable vagabond that I have not been able to do anything with during the whole year he has been in my service. He ended one fine morning by deserting, bag and baggage, which in every country of the world demands the death penalty. Moreover, all these things are affairs of discipline which do not concern women. I do not interfere when you punish your dolls so let me manage my horses and soldiers. Now, I want the nutcracker!"

"Oh, Father dear, help!" cried Marie, wrapping the little man up in her handkerchief. "Help! Fritz wants to take the nutcracker away from me."

At Marie's cries not only the President but his wife and the godfather ran toward the children who presented their reasons in turn, Marie for keeping the nutcracker and Fritz for taking him from her. To Marie's great disappointment, Godfather Drosselmayer, with what seemed to her a malicious smile, sided with Fritz. Fortunately for the nutcracker both the President and his wife were on Marie's side.

"My dear Fritz," said his father, "I have put the

nutcracker under the protection of your sister and from my small knowledge of medicine I can see that the poor unfortunate is badly hurt and in need of her attentions. I therefore give Marie full control over him until he is entirely well. No one is to question this. Moreover, when have you, who are so well up on matters of military discipline, ever seen a general send back to duty a soldier wounded in his service? The wounded are always sent to hospitals."

Fritz wished to insist but the President raised his forefinger to the level of his right eye with the two words, "*Monsieur Fritz!*"

We have already spoken of the influence of these words on the small boy. Ashamed of having deserved a rebuke, he slipped quietly without a word from the side of the table where the hussars had posted their solitary sentinels and withdrawn silently into their night quarters.

Meantime, Marie gathered up the nutcracker's little teeth and continued to hold him wrapped in her handkerchief, his jaws tied together with a white ribbon from her silk dress. For his part the little man appeared to revel in her kindness and feeling himself gently guarded by her was gradually regaining his self-confidence. Suddenly Marie became aware that Godfather Drosselmayer was watching her maternal attentions with a mischievous air. It even seemed to her that his good eye had taken on an expression of malice and spite which she was not accustomed to see there and she drew away from him, but he burst out laughing, saying:

"Good Heavens! my dear godchild, I cannot understand how a pretty little girl like you can be so interested in this ugly little creature."

At this Marie faced him. The compliment which her godfather paid her did not count compared to this unjust attack on her new love. She flew into a temper quite foreign to her gentle nature. The vague resemblance she had sensed between her godfather and the little man of the wooden cape came to her mind.

"Godfather Drosselmayer," she said, "you are unfair to my poor nutcracker when you call him an ugly creature. If you had his pretty long coat, his handsome little trousers and his gay little boots who knows if you would have as fine an air as he?"

At this Marie's parents burst out laughing and Herr Drosselmayer's face lengthened considerably. Astonished at the effect of her words Marie tried in vain to figure out a reason for the laughter and the long face. However, since there is no result without a cause, this result, no doubt, is related to some mysterious and unknown cause which will be explained to us as we go on.

MARVELS

I wonder if you recall my speaking of a certain big glass cupboard in which the children kept their toys. This cupboard stood at the right as one entered the salon.

Marie was still in her cradle and Fritz scarcely able to walk alone when the President had had this cupboard made by a very skilful cabinet-maker who furnished it with such brilliant panes of glass that the toys appeared ten times more beautiful on the shelves than in the hand. On the top shelf, which neither Marie nor Fritz could reach, were kept the marvels from the hands of Herr Drosselmayer. Just beneath was the shelf of picture books. The last two shelves were given over to Fritz and Marie who filled them as they thought proper. It usually turned out, though, that Fritz took possession of the higher one for the encampment of his troops and Marie kept the lower one for her dolls and their belongings.

On this occasion Fritz had arranged the newcomers on his shelf and Marie, relegating Mademoiselle Rose to one corner after giving her bed and bedroom to Mademoiselle Claire, was planning a dolls' party on her shelf.

Mademoiselle Claire, glancing about her new living quarters, saw a table loaded with candies and pralines and best of all a little white bed with coverlets of fresh pink satin. She appeared well pleased with her new home.

Meantime, the night was well advanced. Midnight was near and Godfather Drosselmayer had left some time before but so far it had not been possible to drag the children from in front of the cabinet. Curiously enough it was Fritz who yielded first to the bedtime arguments of his parents, saying:

"After the way my poor hussars have drilled all

evening they must be tired out. I know them; they are true soldiers who realize their duty to me. As long as I am around not one of them will close an eye so I am going to bed."

With a last word of caution to his men that they might not be surprised by an enemy patrol during the night, Fritz straightway retired. Not so with Marie, however. At her mother's insistence that she take leave of the beloved cupboard she begged earnestly:

"Just a little longer, Mother dear. I have lots of important things to see to and as soon as they are done I promise you that I will go to bed."

She pleaded so anxiously that her mother gave in. However, as Mademoiselle Trüdchen had already gone up to turn back the little girl's bed covers for the night, the mother blew out all the candles fearing that Marie in her interest in the new toys would forget them, and left the room lighted only by the pale soft glow of the ceiling lamp.

"Come up soon, Marie," she said as she went out. "If you become too tired you may not be able to get up in the morning."

When the door had closed on her mother and Marie found herself alone, her thoughts rushed back to the poor little nutcracker whom she was still carrying in her arm, wrapped in her pocket handkerchief. She placed him tenderly on the table, unwrapped him and looked at his wounds. He seemed to be suffering and very unhappy.

"Ah, dear little man," she whispered, "do not be

angry because my brother Fritz has hurt you so much. I assure you his intentions were not bad, only his manners have become a little rough and his heart a little hard through his life as a soldier. Outside of that he is a very good boy and I am sure that when you know him better you will excuse him. Moreover, to make up for the harm which he has done, I am going to nurse you so well that in a few days you will be happy and well again and God-father Drosselmayer who understands everything like that will attend to your loosened teeth and dislocated chin."

Marie got no further for at the mention of God-father Drosselmayer's name, the nutcracker made such an ugly face and his green eyes flashed so brightly that the startled little girl stopped speaking and fell back a step. Almost immediately, however, he resumed the kindly expression and melancholy smile peculiar to him and she concluded that she had made a mistake. Perhaps the swinging ceiling light, disturbed by some draught, had cast a strange shadow over the little man's face. She began to make fun of herself and spoke aloud:

"It really was quite silly for me to have thought for a moment that this little wooden fellow could make faces; come, let us go to him and take care of him as he deserves." So addressing herself, Marie picked her protégé up again and went over to the glass cabinet, knocked at the door which Fritz had shut and said to the new doll:

"Please, Mademoiselle Claire, give up your bed to my nutcracker who is ill and for one night use the sofa.

Consider how very strong and well you are as anyone can see from your plump red cheeks. At any rate, one night is soon over, the sofa is good and there will not be many dolls in Nuremberg as well lodged as you."

Mademoiselle Claire, as we may imagine, breathed not a word but it seemed to Marie that she assumed a very haughty and sullen expression. Marie felt, however, that she had arranged quite properly for the doll and removed her without further ceremony. Drawing the bed toward her she carefully placed the disabled nutcracker in it, pulling the covers up to his chin. Then she reflected that Mademoiselle Claire's character was really not known to her as the doll had only appeared a few hours before. Claire had certainly seemed bad-tempered at giving up her bed and she might harm the invalid in some way if he were left at her mercy. Consequently she placed bed and nutcracker on the upper shelf close to the beautiful village where Fritz's army was encamped. Putting Mademoiselle Claire on the sofa she closed the cabinet and was about to join Mademoiselle Trüdchen in her bedroom when suddenly, all around the poor child, from behind the furniture and all parts of the room, came myriads of little muffled sounds. The big wall clock, on top of which brooded a large gilded owl, began to purr louder and louder without, however, making up its mind to strike. Marie, glancing up, saw that the owl had drooped her wings so as to entirely cover the clock and had thrust forward her cat-like face as far as she could. The purring sound increased to a murmur coming like a



SHE CAREFULLY PLACED THE NUTCRACKER IN THE BED

voice from the curved beak of the round-eyed owl:

"Clocks, clocks, purr softly, all of you; the Mouse-King has a sensitive ear. Boum, boum, boum; sing, sing him his old song. Boum, boum, boum; ring bells, strike him last hour for soon he will be no more."

"Boum, boum, boum," re-echoed twelve hoarse, muffled strokes. Marie was quite frightened. She began to shiver from head to foot and was about to make her escape when she noticed Godfather Drosselmayer seated on the clock where the owl had been, the two sides of his long yellow coat hanging down in place of the night bird's drooping wings. At this astonishing sight Marie stood rooted to the ground and called out to him:

"Godfather Drosselmayer, what are you doing up there? Come down near me and do not frighten me so, bad Godfather Drosselmayer."

Now, however, from all sides began a sharp hissing and soon thousands of little feet could be heard scampering behind the walls and thousands of little lights could be glimpsed through the chinks in the partitions. When I say thousands of little lights, that is wrong; they were thousands of little bright eyes. Then Marie realized that a huge population of mice was about to move in from all sides. In fact, ten minutes later, hordes of them entered the room and began to gallop here and there, finally forming into ranks like Fritz's soldiers on the eve of battle. This performance interested and amused Marie since she did not have the fear of mice natural to many children. She was ready to enjoy the spectacle keenly when

suddenly there arose a hissing so terrible, so sharp and prolonged, that icy chills ran up and down her spine. The floor rose under her and the seven crowned heads of the Mouse-King appeared at her feet amid the rent plaster and split wood. Each head began to hiss and squeak loudly while the mouse slowly made its appearance. At once the whole army advanced toward its king, squeaking three times in chorus. Then, still holding their ranks, the regiment of mice began to run across the room in the direction of the glass cabinet against which Marie stood at bay.

We have remarked that Marie was not easily frightened but when she saw herself surrounded by this army of mice, led by the seven-headed one, she was so terrified that she feared her heart would burst. Half-fainting, she reeled back against the glass cabinet, striking one of the panes with her elbow and *klung! crash!* out fell the glass on to the floor into a thousand pieces. Marie felt a sharp pain in her left arm but at the same time her heart-beats subsided for she no longer heard those horrible squeaks which had so alarmed her. The mice had disappeared, all was quiet once more, and she concluded that they had been frightened back into their holes by the noise of the broken glass. Almost immediately, however, following the crash, a strange commotion began in the cabinet and many very small voices were heard crying with all their feeble might:

“To arms! to arms! to arms!” The bells began to ring in Godfather Drosselmayer’s chateau and one heard

on all sides: "Come, be quick, let us get up! It is the enemy! War! war!"

Marie turned around. The cabinet was mysteriously alight and there was great confusion throughout. All the harlequins, pierrots, polichinelles and clowns were busily running hither and thither, exhorting each other, while the dolls made bandages and prepared to nurse the wounded. At last, Nutcracker himself suddenly threw back the covers and jumped out of bed landing on both feet and shouting:

"Knac! knac! knac! Stupid mice, go back to your holes at once or you will have me to reckon with."

At this threat the hissing began again and now Marie saw that the mice had not gone back into their holes at all; frightened by the sound of broken glass they had taken refuge under tables and footstools from which they were beginning to emerge. As for Nutcracker, far from being disturbed by the hissing, his courage seemed redoubled:

"Ah! miserable Mouse-King, it is you, then; at last you are ready to accept the challenge which I have been offering so long. All right, this very night everything shall be decided between us. You, my very good friends, my companions, my brothers, if it is true that we were bound together once by ties of friendship in the shop of Zacharias, stand by me in this rough battle. Come! Forward! Whoever loves me, follows me!"

No speech ever produced such a result. A pierrot, two harlequins, a polichinelle and three clowns cried out

loudly: "Yes, yes, Prince, count on us forever in life and in death! We shall conquer under your orders or perish with you."

At the inspiring words of his friends, Nutcracker felt so reinforced that he drew his sabre and without calculating the distance hurled himself from the second shelf. Seeing this perilous descent Marie could not keep back a scream. She thought he must surely be broken and so he might have been had not Mademoiselle Claire who was on the lower shelf leaped from her sofa and caught him in her arms.

"Ah, dear little Claire," cried Marie, clasping her hands with emotion, "how little I knew you!" But Mademoiselle Claire, quite oblivious to Marie, was saying to Nutcracker:

"Wounded and suffering as you are already, Monsieur, why do you run into fresh dangers? Be content with giving orders—let the others fight. Your courage is too well known to require further proof."

While speaking thus, Mademoiselle Claire was trying to restrain the valorous nutcracker by holding him close to her satin bodice but he began to kick about and fidget so violently that she was forced to let him go. He slipped from her arms and landing on his feet with perfect grace knelt on one knee and addressed her:

"Princess, be assured that although at one time you were not fair to me, I shall never forget you even in the midst of battle."

Mademoiselle Claire leaned over as far as she could

and taking his arm made him rise; then quickly removing her belt all sparkling with spangles, she attempted to slip it over the neck of the young hero. He retreated two steps, bowing in acknowledgment of such a great honor. Then, removing the little white ribbon with which Marie had bandaged him, he carried it to his lips, tied it round his waist and, sword in hand, leaped lightly from the shelf to the floor. At once the squeaks and hissings redoubled in ferocity and the Mouse-King emerged from under the center table surrounded by his army corps, the right and left wings advancing from their entrenchments under the stairs.

THE BATTLE

"Trumpeters, sound the charge! Drums, beat the march!" cried Nutcracker. Immediately the trumpets of Fritz's hussars sounded forth while the drums of his infantry began to beat. One could hear the muffled sound of cannons bumping on their carriages. A corps of musicians was forming, composed of strollers with their guitars, flutists, Swiss shepherds with their horns, who, although not summoned by Nutcracker, hastened to descend from the shelves as volunteers, playing the march of the Sammites. All this undoubtedly went to the heads of the civilian element. A sort of army began to form made up of harlequins, polichinelles, pierrots and

clowns, who armed themselves with anything they could find and were ready for the fray. Even a cook, leaving his stove, went to join them taking along his spit on which hung a half-roasted turkey.

Nutcracker put himself at the head of this valiant battalion, which, to the shame of the regular troops, was ready first. However, lest one infer that our enthusiasm over the civilian army has prejudiced us, we shall make it clear that the hussars and infantry were not to blame for this delay. His sentinels and outposts placed, Fritz had packed the rest of his army into four boxes which he had closed tightly. In vain the unhappy prisoners had heard drum and trumpet calling them to battle; they could not get out. One could hear them stirring in their boxes like crabs in a basket. Finally the grenadiers, less tightly confined than the rest, managed to raise the cover of their box and lend a hand to the light cavalry and infantry. In an instant all were on their feet and rushing to the rescue of the hussars who began at once to gallop about and form in fours. Thanks to the discipline which Fritz maintained the regular troops soon made up for lost time and infantry, cavalry and artillery descended like an avalanche to the admiring applause of Mesdemoiselles Rose and Claire who clapped their hands and urged them on like the beautiful princesses of old from whom no doubt they were descended.

The Mouse-King realized then that he had an entire army to deal with. In the center Nutcracker with his valiant civil guard; to the left the hussars who were only

waiting for the order to charge; to the right a formidable infantry; while on a stool overlooking the field of battle was installed a battery of six cannon. Moreover, powerful reserves composed of gingerbread men and sugar knights of many colors, still in the cabinet, were beginning to stir in their turn. He had gone too far to retreat, however, and so he gave a signal "Couic!" which was repeated in chorus by the whole army. Just then a volley of artillery coming from the stool answered by sending a charge of shot into the mouse ranks. At the same time the whole regiment of hussars moved forward to charge so that the scene of the battle-field was hidden from Marie on one side by the dust from the horses' feet and on the other by the increasingly heavy cannon smoke. Above the sound of cannon, cries of combatants and wails of the dying, Marie continued to hear the voice of Nutcracker dominating the fray:

"Sergeant Harlequin," he cried, "take twenty men and advance on the flank of the enemy, sharpshooting! Lieutenant Polichinelle, form a square! Captain Paillassé, take charge of the platoon firing! Colonel of hussars, charge in mass formation and not by fours as you are doing! Bravo, my lead soldiers, bravo! If everyone does his duty like you the day is ours."

Marie understood, even after these remarks, that the battle was desperate and victory in doubt. The mice, repelled by the hussars, cut down by the sharpshooters, overthrown by the cannon volleys, still kept coming on unceasingly, chewing and tearing everything in their

way. It was, as in the old days of chivalry, a battle where each fought for himself without heed to his neighbor. Nutcracker tried in vain to co-ordinate the troops and proceed in mass movement. The hussars, pushed back by a large body of mice, were scattered and tried without success to gather round their leader. A large battalion of mice had cut them off from the rest of their army and was approaching the civilian guard which was performing marvels. Their leader was toiling with his halberd like a madman, the cook was piercing whole ranks of mice with his spit, the lead soldiers were holding like walls; but Harlequin with his twenty men had been repulsed and was seeking the protection of the battery. Lieutenant Polichinelle's square had been overwhelmed, his fleeing remnants causing disorder in the civilian guard, and Captain Paillasse, undoubtedly because of no cartridges, had ceased firing and was retreating step by step. The result of this movement going on all along the line was to leave the battery of cannons exposed. The Mouse-King understanding fully the importance of silencing the battery ordered his hardiest troops to charge upon it. In an instant the stool was overturned and the gunners killed on their pieces. One of them set fire to his caisson and took twenty of his enemies along as he went to his heroic death. Unfortunately, all this courage was futile against such numbers and soon a volley of shot from his own cannons striking full into the battalion which Nutcracker was commanding told him that the battery of the stool had fallen into the enemy's hands.

From then on the battle was lost. Nutcracker, concerned only with making an honorable retreat and finding some relief for his troops, called out the reserves. At once the gingerbread men and a corps of sugar bonbons came down from the cabinet and gave battle in their turn. They were fresh troops, true, but inexperienced. The gingerbread men, especially, were very awkward and hitting out at random crippled friends as well as enemies. The bulk of the bonbons held firm but they were an extremely mixed company. There were emperors, knights, Tyroleans, gardeners, cupids, monkeys, lions, crocodiles; they could not combine their movements and had no strength in common. In one way, however, they were of great assistance. Scarcely had the mice tasted the gingerbread men and nibbled at the bonbons than they abandoned the unappetizing lead soldiers, polichinelles, clowns and harlequins and gorged themselves on the unhappy reserves. The latter were surrounded by thousands of mice and after a brave defense were devoured arms and all. Nutcracker would have profited by this respite to rally his army but the terrible spectacle of the annihilated reserve had frozen the most courageous hearts; Paillasse was pale as death; Harlequin's coat was in rags; a mouse had penetrated Polichinelle's hump, and like the young Spartan's fox was devouring him; the Colonel of hussars was taken prisoner with part of his regiment and with the horses of the unhappy captives a cavalry of mice was forming. The unfortunate Nutcracker was no longer concerned with

victory or even retreat; he only wanted to die. He placed himself at the head of a little group of his men determined like himself to sell their lives dearly.

All this time the dolls were in despair, wringing their hands and emitting shrill cries. "Alas," said Mademoiselle Claire, "must I die thus in my prime? I, the daughter of a king and destined to such a wonderful future?"

"Alas," said Mademoiselle Rose, "must I fall alive into the power of the enemy? Have I been preserved so long only to be crunched by horrid mice?"

The other dolls were running about weeping, adding their lamentations to those of Mesdemoiselles Rose and Claire.

Nutcracker's affairs were going from bad to worse. He had just been abandoned by the few friends remaining to him, the remnants of the hussars had taken refuge in the cabinet, the lead soldiers had fallen completely into the power of the enemy, the artillery had passed away some time before, the civil guard had died like the three hundred Spartans without retreating a step, and Nutcracker himself was driven against the edge of the cabinet which he tried in vain to scale. In order to do this he needed the aid of Mesdemoiselles Claire or Rose but both had fainted. He made a last effort, rallied all his strength and cried in an agony of despair, "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!" But like the voice of Richard III, his own was not only unanswered but betrayed him to the enemy. Two sharpshooters threw

themselves on him and seized his wooden cape. Then came the voice of the Mouse-King crying from all his seven jaws:

"Take him living, by your heads! Remember I have my mother to avenge. Let his punishment be a warning to all nutcrackers of the future." The Mouse-King hurled himself toward the prisoner.

Marie could no longer endure this horrible sight.

"Oh, my poor Nutcracker," she sobbed, "my poor Nutcracker that I love with all my heart, must I see you perish like this?"

She took off her slipper and hurled it into the middle of the *mêlée* so adroitly that it struck the Mouse-King and rolled him over on the floor. At the same time, king and army, victors and victims disappeared like magic. Marie felt a keen pain in her cut arm. She tried to reach a chair but her strength failed her and she fainted.

When she finally came back to consciousness, Marie found herself in her own bed, a brilliant sun streaming through the frosted window panes. A man whom she soon recognized as excellent Doctor Vandelsstern was seated at her bedside. As her eyes opened she heard him say very softly:

"She is waking up!"

Her mother drew near and gazed down at her with a worried expression in her eyes.

"Oh, Mother dear," cried Marie, "have the horrid mice all gone and is my poor Nutcracker safe? There was such a terrible battle last night."

"Please, dear child," remonstrated Madame Silberhaus, "do not talk so wildly. What could mice have to do with the nutcracker? But you, Marie, have worried us dreadfully. This is what happens when children are wilful and disobedient. You were up too late last night with your dolls; you probably fell asleep and perhaps a little mouse frightened you. In your terror you struck the cabinet with one arm hard enough to break the glass and cut yourself badly. Doctor Vandelsstern has just taken out the last bits of glass from the cut. He says that you very nearly severed the artery. Heaven be praised, I awoke about that time and remembering that I had left you in the salon, went to find you. There you were, poor dear, lying near the cabinet and all around, in wild disorder, lay the dolls, clowns, polichinelles, lead soldiers, gingerbread men and hussars, while in your bleeding arm you held the nutcracker. How did your left slipper come off, dear, and why was it several feet away from you?"

"Ah, Mother dear," replied Marie, shivering at her memories, "those were traces of the big battle between the toys and the mice. What worried me so was seeing some of the victorious mice about to capture poor Nutcracker who was commanding the toys. It was then that I threw my slipper at the Mouse-King and I do not remember anything after that."



SHE TOOK OFF HER SLIPPER AND HURLED IT AT THE
MOUSE-KING

The doctor looked significantly at Mme. Silberhaus and then spoke quietly to Marie as he rose to leave:

"Forget all that, child, and just rest. The mice are gone and the little nutcracker is in the glass cabinet happy and well."

The President met him at the door and Marie, listening to their whispered conversation, was able to catch: "She has been delirious."

The little girl guessed then that they did not believe her but she knew how hard it is to believe strange tales in the day-time and decided to say nothing more, letting them think as they pleased. Then, perhaps, she would be allowed all the sooner to get up and pay a visit to Nutcracker. After all, it was enough for her at the moment to know that he was safe and out of danger. Nevertheless, Marie was quite bored. She could not play on account of her wounded arm and became dizzy when she tried to read or look at pictures. Time dragged horribly and she could scarcely wait for the evenings when her mother would come to tell her stories or read to her.

One evening Madame Silberhaus had just finished the delightful story of Prince Facardin when the door opened and Godfather Drosselmayer appeared, saying:

"I had to see with my own eyes how the little invalid is getting on."

The moment, however, that Marie spied the Commissioner, his plaster and his long yellow coat, the memory of the night when Nutcracker lost the famous battle

against the mice came back to her mind so vividly that she exclaimed involuntarily:

"Oh, Godfather Drosselmayer, you were horrible! I saw you when you were up on the clock covering it with your coat-tails so it would not strike and scare the mice away. I distinctly heard you calling to the king with the seven heads. Why did you not come to the rescue of poor Nutcracker, you mean Godfather? It is your fault that I am here in bed!"

Madame Silberhaus' eyes opened wide with fear. She anticipated another attack of delirium and asked apprehensively:

"Whatever are you saying, dear? Are you going crazy?"

"Not at all," replied Marie. "Godfather Drosselmayer knows very well that I am speaking the truth."

The Commissioner, however, said nothing but winced several times like one who is walking on hot coals, then suddenly began to drone in a nasal tone:

"Pendulum must swing . . . advance and retreat . . . brilliant squadron . . . the solemn clock is going to strike midnight . . . the owl comes and the king flees . . . pendulum must swing . . . advance and retreat brilliant squadron."

Marie looked at Godfather Drosselmayer with eyes growing increasingly alarmed for he seemed to her uglier than usual. She would have been frightened had her mother not been there. Fritz's entrance interrupted this strange chant with a burst of laughter.



GODFATHER DROSSELMAYER TELLS A STORY

"Do you know, Godfather Drosselmayer, that you are very comical today? You are waving your arms around like the old polichinelle that we threw away. Your song has no sense to it at all."

Madame Silberhaus was very grave. "Good friend," she said, "this is a queer joke you are playing. It seems to me to be making Marie worse than before."

"Bah!" answered Godfather Drosselmayer. "Do you not recognize the little clockmaker's song that I always sing when I am mending your clocks?" Moving his chair close to Marie, he addressed her earnestly.

"Do not be angry, dear child, because I did not tear out the fourteen eyes of the Mouse-King. I knew what I was about and now to set myself straight with you, I am going to tell you a story."

"What kind of a story?" demanded Marie.

"The tale of the Nut Krakatuk and the Princess Pirlipate. Do you know it?"

"No, Godfather," said the little girl instantly mollified by this offer, "tell away."

"Godfather Drosselmayer," said Madame Silberhaus, "I hope your story will be gayer than your song."

"It is, indeed, much gayer," said Godfather Drosselmayer.

"Go on, then, tell it," cried the children impatiently. And he went on as we shall see.

PART II

*The Story of the Nut Krakatuk
and the Princess Pirlipate*

IN WHICH IS DESCRIBED THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCESS
PIRLIPATE AND THE GREAT JOY WHICH IT BROUGHT
HER ILLUSTRIOUS PARENTS

There was a small country near Nuremberg, neither Prussian, Polish, nor Bavarian, which was governed by a king. The wife of this king, who by virtue of her marriage held the title of queen, gave birth one day to a little girl who naturally became a princess. She was given the gracious and distinguished name of Pirlipate.

The king, hearing of the happy event, came running all out of breath, and seeing this pretty little girl in the cradle he promptly forgot his dignity. Bursting with pride at being parent to such a charming creature, he began to dance about and shout with joy. Jumping first on one foot and then the other, he addressed the skies:

"Oh, great Powers that be," he cried, "you, who are always surrounded by angels, have you ever seen any more beautiful than my Pirlipatine?"

Pouring steadily into the room behind the king came the ministers, generals, high officials, presidents, commissioners and judges. Seeing their sovereign dancing thus they followed suit, chanting: "No, no, sire, never was there anything in the world as lovely as your Pirlipatine."

Surprising as it may seem, children, there was no undue flattery in this. Since the world was created there was never a more beautiful baby than the Princess Pirlipate. Her little face, rose pink and lily white, seemed woven of delicate silken strands. Her eyes were the most brilliant blue and it was a delight to gaze upon the golden curls which fell over her white shoulders. Pirlipate had been born with two rows of little teeth with which two hours after her birth she bit so vigorously the finger of the Lord High Chancellor who had bent too low in his desire to inspect her that although usually a stoic, he is said by some to have exclaimed: "The deuce," while others maintained that it was only "Oh, dear!" Even to the present day this question is undecided, neither side wishing to give in. The one point on which the "deuce" adherents and the "Oh, dear" contingent agreed was that the Princess had bitten the finger of the Lord High Chancellor, thus proving her claim to an abundance of spirit as well as charm.

Everyone in ^{the} this heaven-blest kingdom was happy now except the queen. No one knew the reason for her worry and anxiety but everyone was impressed by the care with which the apprehensive mother surrounded her baby's cradle. Every door was not only guarded by soldiers, but in addition to two guardians who always stood near the Princess, there were six others seated round the cradle every night. Moreover, the liveliest curiosity was aroused by the fact that each of the six guardians was obliged to hold a cat on her lap and to scratch it continu-



"HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ANY CHILD AS BEAUTIFUL AS
MY PIRLIPATINE?"

ally during the night so that it would never cease to purr.✓

I know, children, that you are as curious as the inhabitants of this little kingdom, to know why these six were obliged to hold cats on their laps and scratch them continually to keep them purring. Since you could search forever without finding the answer, I shall save you the headaches which would surely attend your efforts by telling you myself.

One day some time before the birth of Pirlipate, a half dozen high sovereigns decided to visit the future father of our heroine all on the same day. They were accompanied by princes-royal, hereditary grand-dukes and other important personages. It was an occasion for the kingly host to dig deep into his treasury and entertain with tournaments, carousels and comedies. This was not all. The king had heard through the royal kitchens that the court astronomer after consulting the stars had decreed a wholesale slaughter of pigs. The stars, it seemed, were now favorable to the preparation of sausages. He planned a magnificent repast for his guests. Summoning the queen, he addressed her in the wheedling tone usual to him when he wanted something:

"Dear one, you have not forgotten how I dote on sausage, have you? You haven't, have you, dear?"

The queen knew at once what he meant. She understood that she was to undertake, as on many other occasions, the task of making with her own royal hands a large quantity of various kinds of sausages. She bowed graciously, assuring him that she would do his bidding now

as always. The Grand Treasurer sent to the kitchen a very large cauldron and some huge silver casseroles used for sausages. The queen donned her kitchen apron of white damask and soon the most delicious smells were issuing from the stove. The odor spread into the halls, penetrated rapidly through all the rooms and finally reached the throne where the king was holding court. He was a true lover of food and this odor gave him keen pleasure. However, since he was a serious monarch and noted for his self-control, he resisted temptation for some time. Finally, in spite of his resolute nature, he had to yield. "Gentlemen," he cried, rising, "with your permission I shall return in a moment; wait for me." Through the room and corridors he rushed toward the kitchen, embraced the queen, stirred the contents of the kettle with his golden sceptre to which he then touched the tip of his tongue, and with tranquil mind returned to the council and resumed, although with a slight lack of attention, the conversation where it had been dropped. He had left the kitchen just at the important moment when some pieces of salt pork were about to be broiled on silver grills. The queen, encouraged by his enthusiasm, was happily engrossed with this important occupation and the first bits of fat were sizzling over the charcoal when a small tremulous voice was heard saying:

"Sister, please give me a bit of salt pork. Being a queen, also, I like to feast and since I rarely have a chance at anything worth while, I should like a share in this delicious tidbit." The queen recognized her at once. It was



THE KING TASTED THE SAUSAGES

Dame Sourignon. Dame Sourignon had lived in the palace for many years. She claimed to be of royal blood, queen of a mouse kingdom, holding court under the kitchen hearth.

The queen was a kindly person and while refusing to recognize Sourignon openly as a sister queen, yet treated the little creature with much regard and consideration. Her more aristocratic husband had often reproached her for her democratic tendencies. On this occasion she was full of benevolence and could not repulse her young friend.

"Come, Dame Sourignon, come right along. I give you leave to taste my salt pork as much as you like."

Dame Sourignon advanced gayly and jumping on the grate took in her tiny paw the bits of salt pork which the queen handed her.

Sourignon's little squeals of joy and the succulent odor given out by the broiling salt pork soon attracted her seven sons, her relatives and allies, all bad greedy rascals, who fell upon the salt pork in such a way that the queen was obliged, hospitable as she was, to remind them that if they went on in this way there would be nothing left for her sausages. However reasonable this remark, the seven sons paid no attention and setting a bad example to their relatives and allies, in spite of the remonstrances of their mother and their queen, threw themselves upon the remaining salt pork. The head steward, alarmed at the shrieks of the queen who could no longer cope with her uninvited guests, rushed out and called for the chief

cook who summoned the scullions. The latter came armed with brushes and brooms and succeeded in driving all the mouse people back under the hearth.

Victory, however, came too late. According to the scientific figuring of the court mathematician, who had been sent for in great haste, scarcely a quarter of the salt pork necessary for the sausages was left.

Half an hour later the cannon reverberated, clarions and trumpets sounded and the guests began to arrive. All the potentates, all the princes-royal, all the hereditary dukes who were in the country, came dressed in their best. Some rode in crystal coaches, others on prancing horses. The king received them on the steps of the palace with much courtesy and gracious cordiality. Conducting them to the dining-room he took his place at the head of the table as became a sovereign lord, his crown on his head and in his hand a sceptre. The guests were then seated according to their rank and all went well until after the soup and fish. The host was becoming more and more nervous, however, as the various kinds of sausages were served in turn, and when at last the red sausages appeared he lifted his eyes to Heaven unable to restrain the deep sighs rising from the depths of his distressed heart. Leaning back in his armchair and covering his eyes with both hands he burst forth into such lamentable sobbing that the guests rose from their seats and gathered round in the liveliest anxiety. The situation became very acute. In vain the court physician felt the pulse of the unhappy monarch. He appeared crushed

by the weight of a frightful and mysterious calamity. At last after extreme remedies had been employed such as holding burnt feathers and smelling salts under his nose and dropping keys down his spine, the king partially came to, half opened weary eyes and in a voice almost too feeble to be heard he murmured: "Not enough salt pork!"

It was the queen's turn to pale now. She threw herself on her knees before him crying in a voice strangled with sobs:

"Oh, my unfortunate, ill-fated husband! What trouble I have caused by not heeding your remonstrances. The culprit is at your feet and you may punish her as severely as you please."

"What are you saying?" asked the king. "Whatever happened, and why was I not told?"

"Alas, alas," replied the queen, whose husband had never before spoken to her so roughly, "alas, Dame Sourigonne, her seven sons, cousins and allies, ate up the salt pork." The queen could not go on. Her strength failed her and she fell backward in a faint.

The king arose in a fury, shouting in a terrible voice: "Head Steward, what does this mean?"

The head steward then told what he knew. Attracted to the kitchen by the cries of the queen he had found her majesty at grips with Dame Sourigonne's family and cohorts. He had called the chef who, aided by the scullions, had succeeded in driving the plunderers back under the hearth.

Thereupon the king, aware that he was dealing with

an affair of importance, resumed his dignity and self-possession and in view of the enormity of the crime ordered his privy council to assemble at once that the affair might be handled with the utmost diplomatic skill. This being done, it was decided by a majority that Dame Sourignon, accused of having eaten salt pork intended for the royal sausages, should be tried and if found guilty she and her race exiled forever and her lands confiscated.

But then, the king observed to his skilful advisers, while the trial was going on Dame Sourignon and her family would have time to steal more salt pork which would expose him to other outrages similar to the one he had just experienced. He therefore requested authority to protect himself from Dame Sourignon and her family. The council took a vote and the king was accorded his request.

The monarch then dispatched one of his most imposing carriages in search of a famous inventor by the name of Christian-Elias Drosselmayer. The inventor was to start at once for the palace on a matter of urgent business. He obeyed cheerfully. A true artist, he suspected that a summons from such a renowned monarch could mean only one thing. He would be asked to create some new and interesting device. Once installed in the coach he travelled night and day until he reached the king. He did not even stop to put on his best coat and so he appeared before the royal presence in a long yellow coat which he habitually wore at his work. Instead of being

annoyed the king was appreciative of this breach of etiquette; it seemed to him proof of a seemly desire to comply with his need for haste.

Christian-Elias Drosselmayer was ushered into the king's study and the situation explained to him. The king had decided to set an example by ridding the entire kingdom of mice. Learning of the inventor's reputation he had chosen him to carry out his plans. He had only one concern. In spite of Drosselmayer's cleverness he might not be able to accomplish this feat. But the inventor reassured his royal client and promised him that within a week there would remain throughout the kingdom not a single mouse. He began at once to construct some ingenious little oblong boxes inside of which he attached to the end of a wire a bit of salt pork. When the salt pork was removed the door would automatically close behind the thief who would then find himself a prisoner. In less than a week a hundred similar boxes were made and placed not only under the hearth but in all the garrets and cellars of the palace. Dame Sourçonne was too infinitely wise and astute not to suspect Master Drosselmayer's plot. She assembled her seven sons, nephews and cousins in order to warn them of the ambush, but after having listened with the respectful attention and consideration due her rank and years, they dispersed, ridiculing her fears behind her back. The odor of broiled salt pork in the strange little boxes attracted them irresistibly and they resolved to profit by the good luck which had come to them they knew not whence. At the ex-

piration of twenty-four hours the seven sons of Dame Sourïçonne, eighteen of her nephews, fifty of her cousins and two hundred and thirty-five of her various relatives, without counting thousands of her subjects, had been caught in the mousetraps and shamefully executed.

Then Dame Sourïçonne, surrounded by the ruins of her court and the remains of her people, resolved to abandon these regions scarred by the massacre of her subjects. A rumor of this leaked out and reached the king. His majesty congratulated himself aloud and the court poets wrote grave sonnets on his victory, while the courtiers compared him to Alexander and Caesar.

The queen alone was sad and anxious. She knew Dame Sourïçonne and suspected that she would not let the death of her sons and relatives go unavenged. In fact at the very moment when the queen in order to make the king forget her transgression was preparing a liver paste of which he was inordinately fond, Dame Sourïçonne suddenly appeared before her, saying:

"Killed by your husband without fear or remorse, my children, my nephews, my cousins are dead; but have a care, queen; some day a child of yours may be the object of my revenge. Your husband has forts, cannon, soldiers, mechanics, state commissioners, ministers, sorcerers. The Mouse-Queen has nothing at all, but a just Heaven gave her these teeth instead." Thereupon she disappeared and no one had seen her since.

The queen was so overcome by this prediction that

she let the liver paste fall into the fire. Thus, for the second time, Dame Sourignon had deprived the king of



"BUT HAVE A CARE, QUEEN!"

a favorite dish. This threw him into another rage and made him still more satisfied with the violent measures he had employed so successfully. It goes without saying

that Christian-Elias Drosselmayer was sent away with a handsome reward and returned in pomp to Nuremberg.

HOW, IN SPITE OF ALL THE QUEEN'S PRECAUTIONS,
DAME SOURIÇONNE ACCOMPLISHED HER THREAT

Now then, you know as well as I, do you not, why the queen had the wonderful little princess guarded with so much care? She feared the vengeance of Dame Sourিçonne. The heiress to the happy little kingdom was surely in danger of losing either her life or at least her beauty which, it is agreed, would have been very sad.

What increased the mother's anxiety was that the inventions of Master Drosselmayer availed nothing against the experience of Dame Sourিçonne. True, the court astrologer, fearing lest his department be condemned as useless if he did nothing to help matters, pretended to have read in the stars that the family of the illustrious cat Murr was in a position to defend the royal cradle. That explains why each of the six guardians was forced to hold on her lap continually a male cat of this family. The cats were attached to the court in the capacity of court secretaries. Their services to the state were made more agreeable by delicate and continuous scratching on the part of the guardians. But one evening (there are times, as you know, when one even wakes up sleepy), in spite of the efforts of the six guardians scat-



IT HAPPENED THAT ALL THE EYES CLOSED

tered round the room, each with a cat on her knees, sleep overcame them all in turn. However, as each kept her condition to herself in the hope that her companions would not notice a lack of vigilance and would watch in her place as she slept, it happened that all the eyes closed in succession, all the hands scratching the cats stopped and the latter profited by the occasion to sink into slumber.

No one knows how long this strange sleep had lasted when toward midnight one of the head guardians woke up. Everyone around her was plunged into lethargy; not a snore was heard, all breathing seemed to have ceased. A deathly silence reigned everywhere. Suddenly the super-guardian caught sight of Dame Sourignonne just leaving the cradle of the princess. Everyone was awakened by the guardian's scream but by this time Dame Sourignonne had disappeared completely. The Princess Pirlipate began to cry and all the guardians felt extremely relieved.

"Heaven be praised!" they said. "Since the princess cries she is still alive." But their despair was boundless when they reached the cradle and saw what had befallen this delicate and charming creature. Her beautiful azure eyes had lost their celestial color and had become bright green and crossed; her mouth now reached from ear to ear and that golden head seemed far too large for her warped body, while on her chin flourished a small white cotton beard. She might have passed for an old polichinelle but as a young princess she was hideous.

Just then the queen entered and the guardians fell prone before her while the six cats glanced about to see if there were not somewhere an open window leading to the roof. The poor queen was in despair. They carried her fainting from the royal chamber but the king's grief was still more painful to behold. They were obliged to apply padlocks to the window sashes to prevent his leaping out and to pad his apartment so he would not break his head against the wall. It goes without saying that they took away his sword and allowed him neither knife nor fork nor any sharp or pointed instrument. This last was simplified by the fact that he did not eat during the first two or three days, repeating ceaselessly, "Oh, what an unfortunate monarch am I! Oh, how cruel is destiny!"

Perhaps instead of blaming destiny the king should have reflected that like the rest of us he had been the cause of his own troubles since, had he been willing to eat his sausages with less salt pork and to allow Dame Sourçonne and her sons to remain under the hearth, this deplorable misfortune might not have occurred. But we have to confess that the thoughts of the royal father of Pirlipate did not in any way follow this philosophic trend. In fact, after the fashion of those who throw the blame for calamities which befall them on anyone but themselves, the king now held Christian-Elias Drosselmayer responsible for the tragedy. Convinced that should the inventor guess that he was being summoned to be hung or executed he would never appear, the king sent word that



IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THEY TOOK AWAY
HIS SWORD

he wished to bestow upon him a new order, especially created by his majesty for men of letters, artists and inventors. Master Drosselmayer was not devoid of pride. He liked the idea of the decoration upon his long yellow coat and set out at once. His joy changed to terror, though, when he was met at the frontier of the kingdom by guards who took possession of him until he reached the capital. The king, probably afraid of weakening, did not even want to receive Master Drosselmayer when he reached the palace but ordered him taken direct to Pirlipate's cradle. There he was warned that if the princess had not been restored to her natural state within a month from that day, he would lose his head.

Master Drosselmayer made no pretense at heroism and had never anticipated any but a natural death. He was much frightened by the threat but reassuring himself somewhat at the realization of his scientific skill, which a natural modesty had never prevented him from appreciating fully, he set out to discover whether the ailment was curable or not. He rather leaned to the latter opinion, judging from his first observation. Very adroitly he took off first the head and then one after another all the limbs of the Princess Pirlipate, detaching her feet and hands in order to more carefully examine not only the joints but the interior construction. Alas, the deeper he penetrated into the mysteries of the pirlipatine organism, the more clearly it dawned upon him that as the princess grew up she would become more and more ugly. He then replaced carefully all of Pirlipate's mem-

bers. At the end of his resources, there beside the cradle of the princess whom he dared not leave until she had regained her beauty, Master Drosselmayer gave himself up to a mood of blackest melancholy.

The fourth week had already progressed as far as Wednesday when, as was his daily custom, the king entered to see if Drosselmayer had not yet worked some change in the princess. Seeing her the same as usual he burst forth, threatening the inventor with his sceptre:

"Christian-Elias Drosselmayer, take care; you have only three more days in which to restore my daughter. If you persist in not curing her, next Sunday will see you beheaded."

Master Drosselmayer who was unable to cure the princess, not through obstinacy but through lack of power, began to weep bitterly, gazing with streaming eyes at Princess Pirlipate who was crunching a nut as cheerfully as if she were the prettiest girl on earth. At this moving sight the inventor was struck for the first time by the singular craving for nuts displayed by the princess from birth and the extraordinary fact that she had been born with teeth. Since the time of her enchantment she had taken to crying and continuing to cry until a nut was placed in her hand. Then she would crack it and go happily to sleep munching the kernel. The head guardians would keep their pockets full of nuts and give her one or two as soon as she made a face.

"Oh, Mother Nature!" cried Christian-Elias Drosselmayer, "you have opened to me the door which leads

to the discoveries of your mysteries; I shall knock and it will open!"

With these words which amazed the king, the inventor turned around and asked His Majesty's permission to visit the court astrologer. The king consented on condition that he go under heavy guard. Master Drosselmayer would doubtless have preferred to go alone. However, as he was not free he had to accept what was offered him and cross the streets of the capital escorted like a criminal.

Arrived at the astrologer's home Drosselmayer threw himself into his arms with torrents of tears as they were old friends and very fond of each other. Then they retired into a room apart and perused many huge books on a host of mysteries. At nightfall the astrologer went up into his tower and assisted by Master Drosselmayer who was himself skilful in such matters discovered, in spite of many criss-crossing lines, that in order to break the charm which held the Princess Pirlipate and to bring back her former beauty she had only to do one thing: she must eat the kernel of the nut Krakatuk which had such a hard shell that the wheel of a cannon could run over it without crushing it. Moreover, this shell must be broken in the presence of the princess by the teeth of a young man who had never been shaved and who had always worn boots. The nut must be presented to the princess by him with his eyes closed and he must then take seven steps backward without stumbling or opening his eyes. So spake the stars.

Drosselmayer and the astrologer had worked unceasingly for three days and nights to clear up this mysterious affair. Saturday evening had come and the king was finishing his dinner and was just about to start on the dessert, when the inventor who was to be beheaded the next morning at dawn, entered the royal dining-room. Full of joy and gaiety he announced that he had finally discovered how to bring back Pirlipate's lost beauty. At this news the king took him in his arms with the most touching friendliness and asked him to explain.

The inventor told him of the result of his consultation with the astrologer.

"I knew it all along, Master Drosselmayer," cried the king. "You were only obstinate. Immediately after dinner we will begin. See to it, then, my dear inventor, that in ten minutes the beardless young man is here shod in his boots, the Krakatuk in his hand. Above all see that until then he drinks no wine lest he stumble in performing like a crab his seven steps backward. But the operation once accomplished he may have all he wants."

To the monarch's great astonishment, however, Master Drosselmayer appeared overwhelmed at these words. The king insisted on knowing why he stood mute and motionless in place of setting about executing the royal commands. The inventor fell on his knees.

"Sire," he said, "it is true that we have discovered the way to cure the princess and that this method consists in having her eat the kernel of the nut Krakatuk once it has been broken by a beardless young man who has always worn boots; however, we have neither the



AT NIGHTFALL THEY WENT UP TO STUDY THE STARS

young man nor the nut, we do not know where to find them, and in all probability we shall have great difficulty in getting either one or the other."

At these words the king, furious, brandished his sceptre over the head of the inventor, crying, "Very well, prepare for death!"

But the queen for her part came and knelt near Drosselmayer. She suggested to her august husband that in slicing off the head of the inventor they would lose even the slender ray of hope which was left them. In all probability he who had read the horoscope would find nut and nutcracker. They should put just as much faith in this new prediction of the astrologer as in any of his former ones. His forecasting must come true some time since the king who could not make mistakes had appointed him Grand Seer. Princess Pirlipate being scarcely three months old was not ready to be married and probably would not be before the age of fifteen. This gave Master Drosselmayer and the astrologer fourteen years and nine months in which to find the nut Krakatuk and the young man who must crack it. Therefore, Christian-Elias Drosselmayer should be granted a reprieve at the expiration of which he would return to put himself into the king's hands whether he might or might not be the possessor of the double remedy. In the one case he would be rewarded generously; in the other, executed without mercy.

The king who was a very just man and who, moreover, had just dined on two of his favorite dishes, liver paste and sausage, lent a gracious ear to the prayer of his

sensible wife. He decided immediately that the inventor and the astrologer should undertake the search for the nut and the nutcracker. They should be granted fourteen years and nine months for this but if at the end of that time they were empty-handed they must return and give themselves up to him. If, on the contrary, they brought back the nut Krakatuk, the astrologer would receive a life annuity of one thousand thalers and a fine telescope, while the inventor would receive a sword of diamonds, the Order of the Gold Spider which was the highest honor of the state, and a new long coat. As to the young man who was to crack the nut, the king seemed not at all worried about him and maintained that one could easily find him with the help of insertions in local and foreign newspapers.

Touched by this generosity, Christian-Elias Drosselmayer gave his word that he would find the nut Krakatuk or return to give himself into the king's hands. The same evening the inventor and the astrologer left the capital to begin their search.

IN WHICH WE ARE TOLD HOW THE INVENTOR AND THE
ASTROLOGER TRAVERSED THE FOUR PARTS OF THE
WORLD AND DISCOVERED A FIFTH WITHOUT FINDING
THE NUT KRAKATUK

The inventor and the astrologer had now wandered through the world for fourteen years and five months



THE INVENTOR AND THE ASTROLOGER NOW WANDERED THROUGH
THE WORLD

without finding a trace of what they were seeking. They had visited Europe, America, Africa, and Asia. They had even discovered a fifth part of the world which scholars have since named New Holland because it was discovered by two Germans. In all these wanderings, although they had seen nuts of many shapes and sizes, they had never encountered the nut Krakatuk. They had passed a few years at the court of the King of Dates and the Prince of Almonds; they had consulted in vain the celebrated Academy of Green Monkeys and the famous Society of Squirrels. Finally they had chanced to drop exhausted on the border of a great forest at the foot of the Himalayan Mountains. Utterly discouraged, they reminded each other that they had now only one hundred and twenty-two days to find that for which they had searched during fourteen years and five months. If I tried to tell you, children, all the miraculous adventures which the two travellers had during their long journey you would be forced to meet every evening for a month at least. I will only tell you, then, that Christian-Elias Drosselmayer who was the more desperate one in this search since on the nut hung the fate of his head, had undergone more privations than his companion. He had lost his hair from a sunstroke at the equator and his right eye from an arrow wound inflicted by a Caribbean chief. Moreover, his long yellow coat, which was not new when he left Germany, had literally fallen into rags. His situation was most deplorable, yet so strong is man's zest for life that worn as he was by the successive misfortunes which had befallen him, he viewed with ever-increasing

terror the prospect of giving himself into the king's hands. However, the inventor was a man of honor. There was no question of his trifling with a promise as solemn as this. He resolved, then, no matter what the cost to start for Germany the next day. In fact, there was no time to lose.

Fourteen years and five months had rolled by and the two travellers had, as we have said, only twenty-three days in which to reach the capital.

Christian-Elias Drosselmayer confided this noble resolution to his friend and both decided that they would start the next day. The travellers took to the road at daybreak making their way toward Bagdad. From Bagdad they sought Alexandria; there they embarked for Venice, whence they reached the Tyrol and from the Tyrol they went down into the kingdom of Pirlipate's father, breathing very low in the depths of their hearts a wish that the monarch might be dead or at least in his second childhood. But alas, he was neither.

Arriving in the capital the unhappy Drosselmayer learned that the worthy sovereign had not only lost none of his mental faculties but on the contrary was in better health than ever. There was no chance for him—unless the Princess Pirlipate should have recovered from her ugliness, or the heart of the monarch should have changed, neither of which was possible—to escape the frightful fate which was threatening him. However, he presented himself boldly at the door and asked to speak to the king.

The king ordered his high official to usher in these two strangers. The high official then was forced to tell his majesty that they were neither prepossessing nor well dressed. The king replied that it was not necessary to judge the heart by the face and that the coat did not make the man. At which the high official bowed respectfully and went in search of the inventor and the astrologer.

The king was quite the same and they knew him at once. But they were so changed, especially poor Christian-Elias Drosselmayer, that they were obliged to give their names. The king was pleased to see them return of their own free will for he was convinced that they would never have come back without the nut Krakatuk. He was soon undeceived, however, when the inventor falling at his feet confessed that despite a most conscientious search the astrologer and he had returned empty-handed. The king, although a slightly irritable person, had really an excellent heart. Touched by Christian-Elias Drosselmayer's honesty, he changed the death sentence to one of life imprisonment. As to the astrologer, he contented himself with merely exiling him.

There were now three days left before the expiration of the fourteen years and nine months of respite. Master Drosselmayer who was patriotic to the highest degree asked the king's permission to spend these three days in visiting once more the City of Nuremberg. This seemed a fair enough request and the king granted it

willingly. Since the astrologer was an exile and might as well go to Nuremberg as elsewhere, he decided to accompany his friend and they left at once.

The next day, toward ten o'clock in the morning, they reached Nuremberg. Master Drosselmayer had only one relative, Christophe-Zacharias Drosselmayer, a brother, who was one of the leading toy merchants in Nuremberg. They went straight to his house.

Christophe-Zacharias Drosselmayer was overjoyed to see poor Christian whom he had believed dead. At first he did not recognize him on account of the bald head and eye plaster, but the inventor showed him his famous long yellow coat which, all torn as it was had still some traces of its primitive color, and mentioned so many private affairs which could only be known to Zacharias and himself, that the toy merchant was obliged to give in to the evidence.

Then he inquired what had kept his brother so long away, where he had left his hair, his eye, and the missing pieces of his long yellow coat. Christian had nothing to gain by concealing anything and began by introducing his companion. This formality over, he recounted all his misfortunes from A to Z and ended by saying that he had only a few hours left, since having failed to find the nut Krakatuk, he would enter on the following day an eternal prison.

More than once during his brother's speech Zacharias had snapped his fingers, turned on one foot and clacked his tongue. Under any other circumstances the

inventor would have inquired the meaning of this, but he was so taken up with his troubles that he noticed nothing at first, and only when his brother exclaimed twice "Hum! hum!" and three times "Oh! Oh! Oh!" did he ask him what he meant.

"That means," said Zacharias, "that it would be the deuce indeed—but no—but if—"

"What would be the deuce?" asked the inventor.

"If—" continued the toy merchant.

"If—what?" asked Master Drosselmayer again.

In place of replying, Zacharias, who undoubtedly during this disjointed conversation had been trying to gather his memories, suddenly threw his wig into the air and began to dance, crying, "Brother, you are saved; you will not go to prison. Brother, if I am not mistaken, it is I who have the nut Krakatuk."

With no other explanation to his baffled brother, Zacharias dashed out of the apartment to return a moment later carrying a box in which lay a large gilded nut. This he presented to the inventor. The latter, who dared not believe in such good fortune, took the nut hesitatingly, examined it carefully and then declared that he agreed with his brother; he would be much astonished if this were not the nut Krakatuk. Then he passed it to the astrologer for his opinion. The latter examined it just as carefully as had Master Drosselmayer but replied, shaking his head:

"I should agree with you and your brother if the nut were not gilded, but I have read nowhere in the stars

that the nut should be decorated in this way. Moreover, how would your brother have the nut Krakatuk?"



HE SHOWED THEM A BOX IN WHICH LAY A LARGE
GILDED NUT

"I shall explain," said Zacharias, "how it fell into my hands and how it happens to have this unnatural gilding which prevents you from recognizing it."

Then having seated them both, for he reflected wisely that after a journey of fourteen years and nine months the travellers must be tired, he began as follows:

"The same day that the king sent for you on the pretext of a decoration, a stranger came to Nuremberg carrying a bag of nuts for sale but the nut vendors of the city, wishing to monopolize this industry, picked a quarrel with him just in front of my shop door. The stranger, in order to defend himself, put his bag of nuts on the ground and the conflict had gotten under way to the great delight of boys and passers-by, when a heavily-loaded wagon rolled right over the bag of nuts. Witnessing this mishap, which they attributed to a just Heaven, the nut vendors considered themselves sufficiently avenged and left the stranger alone. He gathered up his sack. All the nuts were smashed except one which he offered to me for twenty marks, remarking, with an odd smile, that I would never regret this purchase however useless it might appear at the moment. Fumbling in my pocket, I was much astonished to discover a twenty-mark piece such as he mentioned. This seemed such a singular coincidence that I handed it to him, at which he gave me the nut and disappeared. I put the nut on sale but although I asked only two marks more than I had paid, seven or eight years passed without anyone seeming at all interested in acquiring it. Then I had it gilded to increase the value, but the forty marks I spent for this were entirely wasted—the nut has remained to the present day without a purchaser."

Just then the astrologer, who had the nut in his hand, gave a cry of joy. While Master Drosselmayer was listening to his brother the astrologer had been delicately scraping the gilding of the nut with his pen-knife and on a little corner of the shell he had found, engraved in Chinese characters, the word, KRAKATUK! There was no more doubt now; the identity of the nut was established.

IN WHICH WE LEARN HOW, AFTER DISCOVERING THE
NUT KRAKATUK, THE INVENTOR AND THE ASTROLOGER
FOUND THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS TO CRACK IT

Christian-Elias Drosselmayer was so anxious to tell the good news to the king that he wanted to take the next mail coach but Zacharias begged him to wait until his son had returned. The inventor yielded all the more willingly as he had not seen his nephew for fifteen years. He remembered him as a charming infant of three and a half years whom he had loved with all his heart.

Presently a handsome youth of eighteen or nineteen years entered the shop and addressed Zacharias as Father. Zacharias, after greeting him, presented him to Christian, saying to the young man: "Embrace your uncle."

The youth hesitated, for Uncle Christian with his long ragged coat, bald forehead and eye plaster, was far from attractive. His father noticed the hesitation and fearing that his brother might be hurt by it, pushed his

son from behind so firmly that the youth fell involuntarily into the arms of the inventor.

All this time the astrologer had been staring at the young man with a steady concentration which so embarrassed its object that he seized upon the first pretext to leave the room. The astrologer asked Zacharias all sorts of questions about his son, which the former hastened to answer with the pride natural to a parent.

Young Drosselmayer was, as his appearance implied, between eighteen and nineteen years of age. Since his earliest youth he had been so jolly and amiable that his mother had delighted in dressing him like the toys in the shop; as a student, as a postillion, as a Hungarian, but always in a costume which required boots. He had as handsome a foot as could be found but his calves were a bit thin. The boots drew attention to his good point and concealed the weak one.

"Then," asked the astrologer, "your son has never worn anything but boots?"

The inventor's eyes opened wide.

"My son has never worn anything but boots," replied the toy merchant. "At the age of ten I sent him to the University of Tubingen where he remained until he was eighteen without contracting any bad habits from his comrades. His only weakness is to let four or five hairs grow on his chin which he will not permit a barber to shave off."

"Then," resumed the astrologer, "your son has never grown a beard?"

Christian's eyes grew still wider.

"Never," replied Zacharias.

"And during his vacations from the University," continued the astrologer, "how did he pass his time?"

"He stayed," said the father, "in the shop wearing his handsome student's suit and through sheer gallantry cracking nuts for young girls who came to buy toys and who on account of this nicknamed him 'Nutcracker.'"

"Nutcracker!" cried the inventor.

"Nutcracker!" echoed the astrologer.

They stared at each other while Zacharias stared at them.

"My dear Monsieur," said the astrologer to Zacharias, "I think that your fortune is made."

The toy merchant, who was not uninterested in this prophecy wanted an explanation but the astrologer put him off until the next morning.

When the inventor and the astrologer were back in their room the latter threw himself into his friend's arms, saying:

"It is he—we have found him!"

"You really think so?" demanded Christian in the tone of a doubter who wants to be convinced.

"Do I believe it? He has all the requirements, it seems to me."

"Let us check up."

"He has never worn anything but boots."

"True."

"He has never shaved."

"True again."

"Then, either through gallantry or choice, he stayed in his father's shop to crack nuts for young ladies who called him 'Nutcracker'!"

"True, indeed."

"My dear friend, blessings never come singly. However, if you still doubt, let us consult the stars."

So they went up on the roof of the house and having studied the young man's horoscope they found that he was destined for a great future. This prediction convinced Drosselmayer.

"And now," said the triumphant astrologer, "there are only two things that you must not neglect."

"What?" demanded the inventor.

"First you must attach to the neck of your nephew a strong piece of wood which will reinforce his jaw so that its strength will be doubled."

"Nothing could be easier," replied Christian-Elias. "It will be the A B C of mechanics."

"The second thing," continued the astrologer, "is that when we get to the king we must not reveal that the young man destined to crack the nut Krakatuk is with us. I have an idea that the more teeth broken and the more jaws dislocated in the attempt to break the nut, the greater will be the king's reward to him who succeeds where so many have failed."

"Dear friend," replied Drosselmayer, "you are a sensible man. Now let us get some sleep."

Descending from the roof to their room the two

friends went to bed and, night-caps over their ears, slept more peacefully than at any time during the past fourteen years and nine months.

The next morning they went to see Zacharias and share their plans with him. As Zacharias was not lacking in ambition his paternal pride made him rejoice at the thought of his son having one of the strongest jaws in Germany. He enthusiastically welcomed a turn of events by which he could claim credit for both nut and nutcracker.

The young man was more difficult to convince. The piece of wood which had to be applied to the nape of his neck especially worried him. However, the astrologer, his uncle and his father made him such fine promises that he finally agreed. Therefore, as Christian-Elias had immediately begun the construction of this device it was soon screwed firmly to the neck of his dubious young nephew. Let us hasten to say, in order to satisfy the curiosity of our audience, that this ingenious apparatus worked perfectly and from the very first day our skilful inventor produced brilliant results with the hardest of apricot kernels and the most obstinate of peach pits.

These tests completed, the astrologer, the inventor and young Drosselmayer set out immediately for the king's palace. Zacharias would have liked to go with them, but as someone had to keep the shop this excellent father remained at Nuremberg.

The first precaution of the inventor and the astrologer upon arriving at the court was to leave young Dros-

selmayer at the inn. Then they went to announce at the palace that they had finally discovered the nut Krakatuk at Nuremberg. According to plan they said nothing of him who was to crack it.

The joy at the palace was intense. The king immediately sent for his privy councillor who controlled the press. He warned him to write out for the royal MONITOR an official notice which the editors of other publications were to copy. This proclamation said in substance that all those who considered their teeth strong enough to crack the nut Krakatuk had only to present themselves at the palace and perform the deed to receive a considerable reward. It is only under such circumstances that one can appreciate how many jaws a kingdom may contain.

The contestants arrived in such numbers that a jury had to be established, presided over by the court dentist who examined each applicant to see if he really had his thirty-two teeth all in perfect condition. Three thousand, five hundred candidates were finally admitted to the first contest which lasted eight days with no other result than an indefinite number of broken teeth and wrenched jaws. A second appeal was then necessary. The national and foreign press were full of advertisements. The king offered the position of Permanent President of the Academy and the Order of the Gold Spider to that superior jaw which should succeed in breaking the nut Krakatuk.

This second trial brought five million entrants. All

the learned bodies of Europe sent representatives. It lasted fifteen days and was, alas, more disastrous than the first. As to the nut, its shell showed not the slightest trace of the efforts made to overcome it.

The king was in despair. He resolved on a grand stroke. As he had no male descendant he put a third insertion into the papers to the effect that the hand of Princess Pirlipate and the succession to the throne would be given to the winner. The only condition was that this time the contestants must be between sixteen and twenty-four years of age.

The announcement of this award moved all Germany. Candidates came from everywhere in Europe. They would have come from Asia, Africa and America, as well as from that fifth part of the world discovered by Christian-Elias Drosselmayer and the astrologer if the readers had not wisely decided that, the time being so limited, the contest was probably taking place or even over at the very moment when they were reading the announcement.

The inventor and the astrologer thought the time had now come to produce young Drosselmayer. It was not possible for the king to offer a greater prize nor a handsomer award. Although a throng of princes with royal or imperial jaws had presented themselves, they were so confident of success that they did not appear to register until closing time. The name of Nathaniel Drosselmayer, therefore, stood 11,375, and last on the list.

This time eleven thousand, three hundred and seventy-four contestants were put out of the running, and on the nineteenth day of the contest, at 11:30 A.M., as the princess was completing her fifteenth year, the name of Nathaniel Drosselmayer was called.

The young man came forward accompanied by his sponsors, the inventor and the astrologer. It was the first time that these two illustrious personages had seen the princess since she had left the cradle and she had changed greatly. It is necessary to admit, with the frankness of a historian, that the change was not for the better. When they had seen her last she was only ugly—now she had become frightful.

At the sight of this creature the poor Nathaniel trembled and asked his uncle and the astrologer if they were certain that the kernel of the nut Krakatuk would surely bring back the beauty of the Princess. If there was any chance that she would remain in her present state he was inclined to attempt the feat, solely for the glory of succeeding where so many others had failed, but to relinquish the honor of marriage and succession to the throne to whomever might wish to accept them. It goes without saying that the inventor and the astrologer reassured their protégé, promising him that the nut once broken and the kernel eaten, Pirlipate would again become the most beautiful princess in the world.

If the sight of Pirlipate, however, had frozen the poor Nathaniel's heart cold with fear, it must be confessed that he had produced quite a contrary effect on

the heart of the heiress to the throne. She could not keep from exclaiming when she first saw him:

"Oh, how I wish that he might be the one to crack the nut!"

Whereupon her governess replied: "I think I shall have to remind your Highness that it is not seemly for a young and pretty princess like you to express her opinion openly in matters of this sort."

Nathaniel really was attractive enough to turn the head of any princess on earth. He wore a long high-collared, heavily-braided coat of violet velvet with gold buttons (which his uncle had ordered made for this solemn occasion), trousers to match, and the charming little well-polished boots which fitted so closely that one would have thought they were painted on him. Only that unfortunate band of wood screwed to the nape of his neck spoiled his appearance. But, by lengthening it, Christian-Elias had given it the shape of a little narrow cape and it might, at a pinch, pass for a peculiarity of dress or some new fashion that Nathaniel's tailor was trying to introduce at court.

Seeing the charming young man enter, the princess' sentiment, so imprudently uttered aloud, was echoed in very low tones by all her attendants. In fact there was no one, not even the king and queen who did not hope secretly that Nathaniel might emerge winner of the contest.

For his part, the young man approached with a confidence which raised the spectators' hopes high.

Reaching the royal throne he bowed to the king, queen, princess, and the attendants. Then, receiving the nut Krakatuk from the hand of the Grand Master of Ceremonies, he took it delicately between his thumb and forefinger; placed it in his mouth, gave the wooden cape a violent blow, and *cric! crac!* the shell broke into several pieces. Skilfully detaching the kernel, he presented it to the princess with a deep bow as respectful as it was graceful, closed his eyes and began to walk backwards.

The princess swallowed the kernel at once and *presto!* The ugly creature disappeared and was miraculously replaced by a young girl of angelic beauty. Her face seemed woven of delicate silken strands, rose-pink and lily white. Her eyes were brilliant azure blue and golden curls fell over her shoulders which were white as alabaster.

A deafening roar of trumpets and cymbals mingled with the joyful cries of the people burst forth. The king, ministers, commissioners and judges, began to dance on one foot as they had at the birth of the princess and it was necessary to throw eau de cologne over the queen's face for she had fainted with delight.

The great tumult bothered young Nathaniel Droselmayer who, you will remember, had still to make seven backward steps. He managed it, however, with a strength which augured well for his future reign. But when he was just reaching back to finish his seventh step suddenly the Mouse-Queen burst through the floor squealing fearfully and threw herself under his feet so

that, as the future prince royal was about to place his foot on the floor, his heel came down full on her body, making him stumble and nearly fall.

Alas! At the same instant the handsome young man became as deformed as the princess had been. His limbs shrank, his head grew larger, his eyes crossed, his mouth stretched to his ears and on his chin appeared a soft, white substance which was later discovered to be cotton.

Punishment was swift, however, for Dame Sourigonne lay expiring on the floor. Young Drosselmayer had stepped on her so hard with the heel of his boot that the contact had been fatal and she breathed her last, chanting:

"Krakatok! Krakatok! Oh, Nut so hard, it is to you that I owe my fate. Hi—hi—hi—hi—but the future will see me avenged. My son will punish you, Nutcracker! Pi—pi—pi—pi—. Good-bye, life, too soon over! Good-bye, Heaven, bowl of honey! Good-bye, world, pleasant spot! Ah—I am going—hi—hi—hi—couic!!!"

The last words of Dame Sourigonne were perhaps not very coherent, but if there is ever a time when one may be excused for this it is when one is breathing one's last!

Now in the midst of all this, no one but the uncle and the astrologer had thought about Nathaniel Drosselmayer. The princess not knowing what had happened



HE PRESENTED IT TO THE PRINCESS WITH A DEEP BOW

ordered that the young hero be brought to her for, notwithstanding the rebuke of her governess, she was anxious to thank him.



"AWAY WITH YOU, HORRIBLE NUTCRACKER!"

At the sight of the unfortunate Nathaniel, however, she buried her face in her hands and forgetting her debt to him, cried, "Away with you, horrible Nutcracker! Away! Away!"

The Grand Marshal took poor Nathaniel by the shoulders and pushed him down the staircase. The king, enraged that anyone should dare to propose a nutcracker for his son-in-law, went to the astrologer and the inventor and in place of the award of ten thousand thalers and the telescope which he was to have given to one and the diamond sword, grand royal Order of the Gold Spider and long yellow coat which he had promised the other, he exiled them from the kingdom, granting them only twenty-four hours to cross the frontier.

They had to obey. The inventor, the astrologer and young Drosselmayer, now a nutcracker, left the capital and crossed the frontier. However, at nightfall the two scholars consulted the stars once more and read there that, all transformed as he was, their protégé could nevertheless become a prince unless he preferred to remain a private individual. He would have his choice when his deformity had disappeared. This would be after he had succeeded in vanquishing the second son and heir of Dame Sourigonne, a Mouse-King with seven heads, and, in spite of his ugliness, had won the love of a charming young lady.

In the meantime, Nathaniel Drosselmayer who had left his father's shop as a cherished only son must return a nutcracker. It goes without saying that at first his father did not know him. When he asked the inventor and the astrologer what had become of his beloved son they replied that the king and queen had not wanted to be separated from the rescuer of the princess and that

young Nathaniel had stayed at court covered with honor and glory.

As to the unhappy nutcracker who was suffering keenly from his painful condition, he murmured not a word, awaiting patiently whatever the future might have in store for him. However, one must confess that in spite of the sweetness of his nature he saved at the back of his big mouth one of his largest teeth for Uncle Drosselmayer, who having lured him away all unsuspecting, was the sole cause of his present unhappiness.

That is, children, the story of the Nut Krakatuk and the Princess Pirlipate as Godfather Drosselmayer told it to Marie and now you know why they say of a difficult task: "That is a hard nut to crack."

PART III

*The Story of Marie
and the King of the Toys*

THE UNCLE AND THE NEPHEW

If any one of you boys and girls has ever been cut by glass you know how long it takes to heal. Marie had to pass a whole week in bed but finally was able to skip about as usual. Unless you do not understand her at all, you will know in advance that her first trip was to the glass cabinet. It looked more attractive than ever. The broken panes had been replaced and behind the glass, scrupulously cleaned by Mademoiselle Trüdchen, gleamed the new and shining Christmas toys. Among all the treasures of her childish kingdom, however, Marie saw first her nutcracker smiling at her from the second shelf, all his teeth as firm as ever.

Gazing dotingly at her favorite a thought struck her, not for the first time, which wrung her heart. She suspected that what Godfather Drosselmayer had related was not a tale but the true history of a feud between the late Mouse-Queen and her son, and Nutcracker. In that case she understood that Nutcracker could be no other than young Drosselmayer of Nuremberg, the agreeable but bewitched nephew of their godfather and that the ingenious inventor was really Commissioner of Medicine Drosselmayer whom she had recognized as soon as he appeared in the story with his long yellow coat. This con-

viction had been strengthened when she had seen him lose in succession his hair from a sunstroke and his eye from an arrow wound. These accidents must then have been the cause of his inventing that ugly plaster and ingenious glass wig which we touched upon at the beginning of this story.

"But why did not your uncle help you, poor Nutcracker?" Marie queried, standing in front of her protégé. She gazed at him reflecting that upon the success of battle hung the disenchantment of this poor little fellow and his right to rule over the kingdom of the toys. The latter had been so ready to submit to his rule, Marie recalled, obeying Nutcracker as soldiers obey a general. All the more strange in contrast did Godfather Drosselmayer's indifference appear to Marie. In her imagination it seemed that the toys must be alive and stirring but when she scrutinized the cabinet all was quiet and motionless. Rather than give up her idea, Marie attributed this to the enchantment of the Mouse-Queen and her son. This thought suited her so well that presently she began to address Nutcracker out loud:

"Even though," she said, "hindered by the spell which holds you, you cannot stir nor say the tiniest word to me, I am sure, dear Nathaniel Drosselmayer, that you understand me perfectly and know that my intentions are favorable to you. Count on me then if you need me. Meantime, do not worry; I am going to entreat your uncle to help you. He is very skilful and if he loves you ever so little he will do so."

In spite of these friendly words Nutcracker did not budge but it seemed to Marie that a smile passed very gently through the panes of glass and that a tiny voice like a small silver bell murmured: "Marie, my guardian angel, I would be yours. Help me, Marie!" These mysterious words made Marie shiver a little and fired her loyalty still more.

At dusk the President came in with Commissioner Drosselmayer. Mademoiselle Trüdchen prepared the tea-table and the family gathered around it chatting gayly, all except Marie who brought her little armchair and seated herself beside Godfather Drosselmayer. During a lull in the conversation she fixed him with her great blue eyes and said:

"I know now, Godfather Drosselmayer, that my nutcracker is your nephew, young Drosselmayer of Nuremberg. He has become prince of the toy kingdom as the astrologer predicted but as you know he is engaged in an open and desperate war with the Mouse-King. Why, dear Godfather Drosselmayer, did you not help him when you were on top of the clock like that, and why are you abandoning him now?"

Despite the laughter of her parents and Mademoiselle Trüdchen, Marie told again the story of that famous battle she had witnessed; only Fritz and Godfather Drosselmayer remained unsmiling.

"Wherever," said the President, "does this little girl find all the nonsense that fills her mind?"

"She has a very lively imagination," replied her

mother. "These are really only dreams and ideas occasioned by her fever."

"The best proof of that," said Fritz, "is that she says my red hussars turned tail. That cannot be true unless they are cowards in which case they would never have come out in the first place."

Then Godfather Drosselmayer, a strange, mysterious, half-smiling expression on his face, took Marie on his lap saying very gently: "Dear child, you do not know what you are in for in thus warmly interesting yourself in the affairs of Nutcracker. You will have much to endure if you continue to take the part of this poor unfortunate. The Mouse-King who considers him the murderer of his mother will pursue him everywhere. However, it is you—not I, understand—it is you alone who can save him. Have courage, be loyal and all will go well."

Neither Marie nor anyone else could make anything out of this speech. It seemed so strange to the President that he silently took the Commissioner by the hand and, feeling his pulse, said, "My good friend, you have much fever and I advise you to go to bed."

THE CITY OF THE KING

During the night after the preceding events, as the moon shone between the curtains of the room where little

Marie lay sleeping, she was awakened by a noise which seemed to come from one corner, a mixture of sharp whistlings and squeals.

"Alas!" cried Marie, recognizing this sound from the evening of the furious battle, "alas! the mice are coming back. Mama, Mama!"

Hard as she tried, however, her voice strangled in her throat. She tried to escape but she could move neither arms nor legs and seemed nailed into her bed; then turning frightened eyes toward the corner of the room from whence came the noise she saw the Mouse-King coming through the wall, head by head, each wearing its crown. After circling the room several times, like a conquering hero, he leaped upon a table at Marie's bedside and addressed her:

"You must hand over to me your sugar-plums and marzipan, little girl, or I shall eat up your friend Nutcracker." With this threat he fled from the room by the same way he had come in.

Marie was so frightened by this terrible sight that she woke up next day all pale and heavy-hearted, especially because she dared not tell, lest she be made fun of, what had happened to her during the night. Twenty times she started, when alone with her mother or Fritz, but stopped herself convinced that neither one nor the other would believe her. What stood out above everything else was that her sugar-plums and marzipan must be sacrificed to save Nutcracker. Consequently, that

evening she spread all of them out on the edge of the cabinet shelf.

The next day the President's wife said: "Really, I wonder where all the mice come from who have suddenly burst in upon us. See, Marie," she continued, leading the little girl to the salon, "the bad things have eaten up all the sweetmeats."

Madame Silberhaus had made a mistake. She should have said "spoiled," for this greedy Mouse-King, not finding the marzipans to his taste, had nibbled at them so that they had to be thrown out. However, as Marie did not care for the bonbons she did not regret very keenly the sacrifice which the king of mice had demanded of her, and believing that he would be content with this first contribution she was quite satisfied with having saved Nutcracker at so little cost to herself.

Unfortunately, her satisfaction was of short duration. The following night she was awakened by a squealing in her ears. Alas! it was the Mouse-King again, his eyes gleaming brighter than on the preceding night. In the same half-whistling, half-squealing voice, he said to her: "You must give me your sugar and bisque creatures, little one, or I shall eat up your friend Nutcracker." And he went out as before.

The next morning Marie went straight to the glass cabinet and gazed sadly at the delectable tidbits. Her grief was very natural for there never were more tempting little figures than those belonging to her.

"Alas!" she said, turning toward the nutcracker,



THE MOUSE-KING LEAPED ON THE TABLE AND ADDRESSED MARIE

"what would I not do to save you? However, you will agree that what is demanded of me is very hard."

At these words Nutcracker assumed such a sad expression that Marie, always in dread of seeing the Mouse-King's jaws open to devour him, resolved to make another sacrifice in order to save the unfortunate young man. That evening she put the sugar and bisque dainties on the edge of the cabinet shelf where the preceding night she had arranged the sugar-plums and marzipan. She kissed them good-bye, one after another, her shepherds, her shepherdesses and their sheep, hiding behind them all a little round-cheeked child whom she particularly loved.

"Ah, this is too much!" Mme. Silberhaus exclaimed the next morning. "Some dreadful mice have certainly set up their home in the glass cabinet for all of poor Marie's dolls have been eaten."

At this news great tears welled up in Marie's eyes. Almost at once, however, she dried them and smiled, thinking to herself: "What do shepherds, shepherdesses and sheep matter since Nutcracker is saved?"

"But," cried Fritz, who had listened thoughtfully to the whole conversation, "let me tell you, Mother, that the baker has an excellent cat which we can borrow and it will put an end to all this by devouring the mice one after another even to Dame Sourçonne herself and her son, the Mouse-King."

"Yes," replied Mme. Silberhaus, "but your cat in jumping on the tables and mantels will break my cups and glasses to pieces."

"Oh, bah!" said Fritz, "there is no danger; the baker's cat is too adroit a rascal to make such blunders. I wish I could walk on the eaves and roofs as skilfully as he."

"No cats in this house! No cats here!" exclaimed his mother who could not endure them.

"But," said Monsieur Silberhaus, attracted by the argument, "there is something in what Fritz has said. Suppose in place of a cat we use mousetraps."

"Wonderful!" cried Fritz. "That is great, since our own Godfather Drosselmayer invented them."

Everybody smiled but after investigating it was discovered that there was no such contraption in the house. They sent to Godfather Drosselmayer for one, baited it with a piece of salt pork and put it in the place where the mice had wreaked such havoc the night before.

Marie went to bed hoping that next morning would find the Mouse-King caught in the box whither his greediness could not fail to entice him. Toward ten o'clock in the evening, however, just as before, she was wakened from her first sleep. The Mouse-King was again addressing her:

"I shall not go into the little house and your salt pork does not tempt me," he said. "I shall not be caught; but you must give me your picture books and your little silk dress; otherwise I shall eat up your nutcracker."

Marie woke up next morning more worried and sad than ever. She did not need to be told that the mousetrap had been useless. As Madame Silberhaus went

out to oversee the breakfast preparations, Marie went into the salon and approached the glass cupboard, sobbing.

"Alas! good Nathaniel Drosselmayer," she said, "where will all this stop? When I have given the Mouse-King all my pretty picture books and my beautiful silk dress, the Christmas gift of the Infant Jesus, he will still be unsatisfied and every day he will ask more of me. When I have nothing left perhaps he will want to eat me in place of you. Alas! what shall I do, dear Nathaniel Drosselmayer? What shall I do?"

While she was crying and going on like this, Marie suddenly perceived that Nutcracker had a spot of blood on his neck. From the day when Marie had guessed that her protégé was the son of the toy merchant and the nephew of Godfather Drosselmayer she had left off carrying him about and had not so much as touched him with the tips of her fingers, but now seeing him hurt and fearing that his wound might be dangerous she took him gently out of the cabinet and began to wipe off his neck with her handkerchief. What was her astonishment when suddenly she felt Nutcracker beginning to stir in her arms. She put him back quickly on to the shelf. His mouth was moving from right to left which made it appear bigger than ever and finally, with great difficulty, he managed to speak these words:

"Ah! very dear Mademoiselle Silberhaus, my good friend, how much I owe you and how deeply grateful I am to you! Do not sacrifice for me your picture books and silk dress. Just get me a sword—a strong sword—and I will take care of everything."

Nutcracker had much more to say but his words became unintelligible, his voice died quite away and his eyes, animated for a moment by an expression of tender melancholy, became motionless and stony. Marie was not in the least frightened. She jumped with joy, so delighted was she to be able to save poor Nutcracker without having to sacrifice her picture books and silk dress. Only one thing worried her and that was where to find this good sword which the little fellow needed.

Marie resolved then to confide her troubles to Fritz who, for all of his bragging, she knew to be an obliging boy. So she led him to the glass cupboard, told him all that had happened and ended by explaining what she wanted of him. The only thing which interested Fritz in all this tale was whether his hussars had actually lost courage in the heat of battle. He demanded to know if it was really so and as he knew the little girl to be incapable of lying, upon her assurance that it was, he addressed a speech to his hussars which appeared to fill them with shame. This was not all; in order to punish the whole regiment through its chiefs, he degraded the officers one after another and forbade the trumpets to play the March of the Hussars of the Guard for the period of one year. Then turning toward Marie, he said:

"As to Nutcracker, who seems to be a brave fellow, I think I have what he wants. Yesterday I put on half pay (with meals, of course) an old major who had finished his time of service. I suppose he has no further need of his sabre which has an excellent blade."

It remained to find the major. He was finally discovered eating one of the meals which Fritz had provided for him in a little remote inn at the very back of the third shelf of the cabinet. As Fritz had thought, he made no objection to relinquishing his sword which was of no use to him now. It was at once hung around the neck of Nutcracker.

Excitement kept Marie awake the next night. She was so wide awake that she was certain of having heard the clock in the salon strike twelve. Scarcely had the vibration from the last stroke ceased when strange noises began to come from the side of the cabinet and there was a loud clicking of swords as if two desperate adversaries had come to blows. Suddenly one of the two said, "Couic!"

"The Mouse-King!" cried Marie, joyous and fearful at the same time. Nothing further happened for a while but soon there was a gentle, very gentle, knock at the door and a little flute-like voice said:

"Very dear Mademoiselle Silberhaus, I bring joyful news. Open the door, I beg of you."

Marie recognized the voice of young Drosselmayer. She hastily donned her dress and opened the door. Nutcracker was there holding a gory sabre in his right hand and a candle in his left. As soon as he saw Marie, he bowed low and said:

"It is you alone, Mademoiselle, who has inspired me with the heroic courage I have just displayed and who has given my arm the strength to fight the insolent one who dared to threaten you. This miserable Mouse-King

lies there finished. Oh, Mademoiselle, please do not disdain these trophies of victory offered from the hand of a knight who will be devoted to you until death."

Speaking thus, Nutcracker took from his left arm the seven gold crowns of the Mouse-King, which he was wearing like bracelets, and offered them to Marie who accepted them with pleasure. Encouraged by her graciousness he rose and went on:

"Ah, my dear Mademoiselle Silberhaus, now that my enemy is conquered, what wonders I can show you if you will have the condescension to accompany me just a few steps. Oh, please do so, my dear Mademoiselle, I beg of you!"

Marie did not hesitate for an instant, knowing how much she deserved his gratitude and being very certain that he could have no evil designs upon her.

"I will follow you," she said, "my dear Monsieur Drosselmayer, but it must not be far nor the trip long because I have not had enough sleep."

"I shall choose then," said Nutcracker, "the shortest road although it is the most difficult." He walked ahead and Marie followed.

THE KINGDOM OF THE DOLLS

They soon arrived at a large closet which was situated in a hall quite near the door and served as a ward-

robe. There Nutcracker stopped and to her great astonishment Marie noticed that the doors of the closet, usually tight shut, were wide open so that she clearly saw her father's travelling coat of fox fur hanging in front of all the other clothes. Nutcracker climbed very adroitly up its edges, pulling himself along by the frogs, until he could reach a large tassel which hung by a heavy cord down the back of the coat. He instantly drew from it a pretty cedar staircase which he set up with its base touching the floor and its top lost up in the sleeve of the coat.

"And now, dear Mademoiselle," said Nutcracker, "please be kind enough to give me your hand and go up with me."

Marie obeyed and scarcely had she looked up the sleeve when a bright light shone before her and she found herself suddenly transported into the middle of a perfumed meadow which glittered as if it had been sown with precious stones.

"Oh, oh!" cried Marie, dazzled, "where are we, dear Monsieur Drosselmayer?"

"We are in the plain of sugar candy, Mademoiselle, but we will not loiter, if you please, and will go right through this door."

Not until then did Marie see, on lifting her eyes, a splendid door through which one left the meadow. It seemed to be made of white, red and brown marble, but when Marie approached she saw that the whole door was

of orange flower conserve, pralines and raisins. This door, Nutcracker informed her, was called the praline door. It gave on to a large gallery supported by columns of sugared orange. On this gallery six monkeys, dressed in red, made most original if not melodious music. Marie was in such a hurry that she did not even notice that she was walking on a pavement of pistachios and macaroons which she mistook for marble. At last she reached the end of the gallery and the outside tier, to find herself surrounded by most delicious perfumes which came from a charming little wood that lay before her. This tiny forest was illuminated by many lights in such a resplendent manner that one could see distinctly the golden and silver fruits which hung from branches ornamented with ribbons and bouquets as at a bridal party.

"Oh, my dear Monsieur Drosselmayer," cried Marie, "what is this charming place?"

"We are in the Christmas Forest, Mademoiselle," said Nutcracker. "It is here that they come for the trees on which the Infant Jesus hangs his presents."

"Oh," continued Marie, "can't I stop here a minute? It is so lovely and it smells so good!"

Nutcracker clapped his hands and immediately several shepherds and shepherdesses, hunters and huntresses, came out of the forest. They seemed made of powdered sugar, so delicate and white were they. In their hands they carried a delightful stool of chocolate nougat on which they placed a licorice jujube for a cushion, and

very politely invited Marie to be seated. Scarcely had she done so when, just as in an opera, the shepherds and shepherdesses, the hunters and huntresses, took their places and began to dance a charming ballet to the music of hunting horns through which the hunters blew in such a vigorous fashion that their cheeks seemed made of conserve of roses. Then, having finished, they all disappeared in a thicket.

"Pardon me, dear Mademoiselle Silberhaus," Nutcracker said, reaching out his hand to Marie, "pardon me for having offered you such a wretched ballet but those scoundrels only know how to repeat over and over the same step which they have already done a hundred times. As to the hunters, they have blown into their horns like sluggards and I can tell you they shall answer to me. But let us forget them and continue the walk if you please."

"I found it all very lovely, though," said Marie, accepting Nutcracker's invitation, "and it seems to me, dear Monsieur Drosselmayer, that you are unjust to the little dancers."

Nutcracker made a face which meant: "We shall see and your kindness will count in their favor." They then went on until they reached the banks of a river which seemed to exhale all the perfumes that scented the air.

"This," said Nutcracker, not waiting for Marie to ask, "is the Orange River. It is one of the smallest in the kingdom for, with the exception of its good odor, it

cannot be compared to the River Lemonade which flows into that southern sea that they call the Punch Sea nor to the Lake of Oranges which empties into the Sea of Almonds."

Not far from there was a little village in which the houses, churches, and even the parsonage were all brown; only the roofs were gilded and the resplendent walls encrusted with tiny pink, blue and white bonbons.

"This is the village of Marzipan," said Nutcracker. "It is a pleasant city, as you see, situated on the Brook of Honey. The inhabitants of it are quite agreeable to look at, though always in a bad humor as they are never without toothaches. But, dear Mademoiselle Silberhaus," continued Nutcracker, "please do not let us stop; I beg you to inspect all the villages and little cities of this kingdom. To the capital! To the capital!"

Still holding Marie by the hand he went on more briskly than before. Full of curiosity she walked by his side, light as a bird. Finally, a perfume of roses filled the air and everything around her became pink from the reflection which came from a rose-colored river flowing with charming melody. On the perfumed waters silver swans with golden collars gently glided singing among themselves the most delightful songs until, inspired by this harmony, diamond fish began to jump out of the waters around them.

"Ah!" exclaimed Marie, "there is the pretty river that Godfather Drosselmayer was going to make me for

Christmas and I am the little girl who is petting the swans."

THE JOURNEY

Nutcracker clapped his hands once; then the river of essence of roses swelled visibly and a chariot of shells covered with jewels, glistening in the sun and drawn by golden dolphins, came out from its sparkling waves. Twelve charming little Moors with caps of sword-fish scales and coats of humming-birds' feathers, jumped on shore and gently transported Marie and Nutcracker into the chariot which then began to proceed leisurely along the surface of the water.

It surely was a ravishing sight and one which might be compared to the voyage of Cleopatra going up the Nile, to see Marie in her chariot of shells, scented with perfumes, floating on the waves of essence of roses. Her chariot was drawn by gold dolphins that lifted up their heads and launched into the air shining bunches of rosy crystals which burst into all the colors of the rainbow. Then a soft humming began and little silvery voices were heard singing:

"Who is this sailing on the river of essence of roses? Is it the fairy Mab or Queen Titania? Tell us, little fish, who shimmer under the waves like liquid lightning; tell us, gracious swans who glide on the surface of the water;

tell us, birds with bright colors who go through the air like flying flowers.”

All this time the twelve little Moors who had jumped behind the shell chariot shook in rhythm their little parasols trimmed with bells, in the shade of which they sheltered Marie as she gazed at the charming faces which greeted her from every wave.

It was thus that she crossed the river of essence of roses and drew near to the opposite side. Then, when she was only an oar's length away, the twelve Moors jumped, one after the other, on the banks and making a chain they carried Marie and Nutcracker on a carpet of angelica all strewn with mint wafers.

They had now to pass through a little grove even prettier than the Christmas Forest so brightly did each tree sparkle with its sap. Most remarkable of all were the fruits hanging to the branches. They were not only of a singular color and transparency, some yellow like topazes, others red as rubies, but they had a strange perfume.

“We are in the forest of Jam,” said Nutcracker, “and beyond the woods is the capital.”

Marie spread aside the last branches and stood stupefied at the extent, magnificence and originality of the city which rose up before her. Not only were the walls and belfries of the brightest colors, but one would never find anywhere else on earth such buildings. As for the ramparts and gates, they were built entirely of glacé

fruits, their natural color shining in the sunlight through the crystallized sugar which covered them.

At the principal gate through which they entered silver soldiers presented arms to them and a little man wrapped in a gold-brocaded dressing gown threw himself on Nutcracker's neck, saying:

"Oh, dear Prince, here you are at last! Welcome to the City of Jam!" Marie was a bit astonished at the pompous title given to Nutcracker but her attention was soon distracted at hearing such a clamor of voices that she asked him if a fête or revolt of some kind were going on in the kingdom of the toys.

"Not at all, dear Mademoiselle Silberhaus," replied Nutcracker. "This is a joyous and noisy population; it is always as you see it today. Just go on forward, please; that is all I ask of you."

Marie hurried forward and soon found herself at the large market-place which was one of the finest sights that could be seen. All of the houses in the neighborhood were of sugar candy made up in open work, gallery upon gallery.

In the middle of the square was a huge sweet bun, shaped like an obelisk, from the center of which gushed forth fountains of lemonade, orange juice and red currant syrup. There were bowls heaped high with whipped cream which many apparently very well-bred people were eating publicly with a spoon.

The most agreeable sight of all was the number of delightful little people who were strolling about by thou-

sands, arm in arm, elbowing each other, singing and talking out loud. This occasioned the joyous tumult that Marie had noticed before.

Besides the inhabitants of the capital there were men from every country—Americans, Jews, Greeks, Tyrolians; officers, soldiers, magicians, monks and shepherds—all sorts and conditions of people such as were never gathered together before.

Soon the tumult redoubled at the mouth of a street which led into the square and people scattered to let a procession pass by. It was the Grand Mogul who was being carried in a palanquin accompanied by ninety-three nobles of his kingdom and seven hundred slaves. Just at this moment, from the opposite street, emerged the Grand Sultan on horseback, accompanied by three hundred followers.

The two sovereigns had always been rivals and enemies. Their followers rarely met that the encounter did not lead to some difference of opinion. It was still worse, you can see, when these two powerful monarchs found themselves facing each other. From the midst of this confusion the people of the country tried to withdraw but soon cries of rage and despair were heard. An escaping gardener had hit with the handle of his spade the head of a very high-caste Brahmin and the horse of the Grand Sultan himself had overturned a frightened polichinelle who was dodging between its legs.

The tumult was increasing when the man in the

brocaded dressing gown, who had addressed Nutcracker as a prince, climbed on top of the sweet bun and ringing a clear, loud and silvery bell three times, exclaimed: "Caterer! Caterer! Caterer!"

The commotion ceased at once. The confused processions untangled themselves. The Grand Sultan who was covered with dust was brushed off and the Brahmin's head was put back with a caution that he not sneeze for three days lest it come off. Peace was restored, the joyous demeanor resumed and everyone came back to imbibe lemonade, orange juice and currant syrup at the fountain and eat whipped cream from the bowls.

"But, dear Monsieur Drosselmayer," said Marie, "why does the word 'caterer,' three times repeated, have such an influence on these little folks?"

"I can only tell you, Mademoiselle," replied Nutcracker, "that for many generations the inhabitants of the City of Jam have believed firmly in the power and influence of the word 'caterer'; this one word pronounced by the Burgomaster is as you have just seen sufficient to calm the wildest uproar and send everyone quietly home in peaceful silence."

Thus conversing, they had reached a palace which glowed with a pink light and was surmounted with a hundred aerial turrets. The walls were strewn with bouquets of violets, tulips and jasmine which enriched the rosy background with various colors. The large center cupola was decorated with thousands of golden and silver stars.

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Marie, "what is this marvelous building?"

"It is the palace of the Marzipans," replied Nutcracker, "and one of the finest architectural examples in the toy kingdom."

Lost as she was in contemplative admiration, Marie did not miss the fact that the top of one of the large towers was missing entirely and that some little gingerbread men mounted on a cinnamon stick scaffold were busy repairing it. She was about to inquire about this when Nutcracker forestalled her:

"Alas!" he said, "a little while ago this palace was threatened with great losses if not entire ruin. The giant Dainty-Mouth was carelessly chewing the tower and had even begun to nibble at the cupola when the distracted inhabitants arrived bringing him as tribute a part of the city called Nougat and a large portion of the Angelica forest. In consideration of this he consented to go away without doing further damage."

↓ Just then they heard delightful music. The doors of the palace opened by themselves and twelve little pages came out carrying in their hands sprays of aromatic herbs alight like torches. Their heads made of whole pearls, six of their tiny bodies composed of rubies and six of emeralds, they trotted prettily on little feet of finely chiselled gold.

These were followed by four ladies no taller than Mademoiselle Claire but so splendidly dressed, so richly ornamented that they were unmistakably the royal prin-



"OH," EXCLAIMED MARIE, "WHAT IS THIS MARVELOUS
BUILDING?"

cesses of the City of Jam. All four, perceiving Nutcracker, threw themselves on his neck with the tenderest affection, exclaiming with one voice:

"Oh, my Prince, my excellent Prince! Oh, my brother, my excellent brother!" Nutcracker seemed very much troubled. Drying the many tears which fell from their eyes, he took Marie by the hand and sadly addressed the four princesses:

"My dear sisters, this is Mademoiselle Silberhaus, whom I present to you. She is the daughter of the much-respected President Silberhaus of Nuremberg. She saved my life for if, at the moment when I was about to be defeated, she had not thrown her slipper at the Mouse-King, and if, later, she had not been kind enough to lend me the sabre of a major retired from service by her brother, I should now be in my grave or, worse still, eaten by the Mouse-King. Ah, dear Mademoiselle Silberhaus," cried Nutcracker in an enthusiasm which he could no longer conceal, "Pirlipate, Princess Pirlipate, daughter of a king as she was, did not deserve to unlace your pretty little shoes."

"Oh, no, no, certainly not," repeated the four princesses in chorus and throwing themselves on Marie's neck, they cried:

"O noble rescuer of our dearly beloved brother! O excellent Mademoiselle Silberhaus!"

With these joyful exclamations the four princesses conducted Marie and Nutcracker into the palace and made them sit down on lovely little couches of cedar and

brazilian wood decorated with gold flowers. Explaining that they wished to prepare a repast, they gathered together a quantity of little vases and bowls of finest Japanese porcelain, spoons, knives, forks, casseroles and other kitchen utensils, all in gold or silver. They brought the most beautiful fruits and most delicious cakes and candies that Marie had ever seen and began to bestir themselves in such a fashion that she could readily believe that the princesses of the City of Jam must be marvelous cooks. But as she also understood about such things, she secretly wanted to take an active part in what was going on. As if she had guessed Marie's thoughts, the prettiest of the four royal sisters held out a little golden mortar to her and said:

"Dear Mademoiselle, please pound this sugar candy." Marie hastened to do so and while she was pounding gently in the mortar which gave out a delightful melody, Nutcracker began to tell his adventures in detail. Strangely enough, it seemed to Marie that during this recital the words of young Drosselmayer, like the sound in the mortar, were coming more and more dimly to her ears. Soon she was enveloped by a soft mist; then the mist changed into a silver gauze which grew thicker and thicker around her and gradually Nutcracker and his royal sisters were lost to view. Then strange songs which recalled those she had heard on the river of essence of roses were to be heard, mingled with the rising murmur of waters. It seemed to Marie that the waves were under her, lifting her as they swelled. She felt herself going

higher, higher, higher still, until horrors! paff! she fell from an immeasurable height.

One cannot drop some thousand feet without awaking, so Marie awoke and found herself in her little bed. It was broad daylight. Her mother stood beside her saying:

"How is it possible to be as lazy as you are? Come, wake up! Get dressed quickly for breakfast is waiting."

"Oh, dear little Mother," said Marie, opening her astonished eyes, "where did I go last night with young Master Drosselmayer? What wonderful things he showed me!"

Marie related all that had happened and when she had finished her mother said to her:

"You have had a long, lovely dream but now that you are awake, forget all about it and come to breakfast."

Still, even as she dressed, Marie insisted to herself that it was not a dream at all. Her mother went to the cabinet, took out Nutcracker who was, as usual, on his third shelf, carried him over to the little girl and said:

"How could you think for a moment, silly child, that this doll of wood and cloth could be alive, move around and have thoughts?"

"But, Mother dear," the little girl said impatiently, "I know very well that Nutcracker is no other than young Master Drosselmayer, nephew of our godfather."

Marie heard sounds as of mirth behind her and turned to see her father, Fritz and Mademoiselle Trüdchen all hugely amused at her expense.

"Oh!" cried Marie, "are you too, Father, making fun of my Nutcracker? He spoke very respectfully of you when he presented me to his sisters in the Marzipan palace."

The mirth increased so at this remark that Marie realized she would have to give some proof of what she was saying or be taken for a lunatic. She went into the next room and got a little box into which she had stowed away the seven crowns of the Mouse-King. Bringing it to her mother she said:

"Look, Mother dear, here are the Mouse-King's crowns that Nutcracker gave me last night in token of his victory."

Mme. Silberhaus examined these little crowns with much surprise. They were made of a strange and very bright metal, chiselled with an extraordinary delicacy. The President, himself, could not examine them enough and judged them so precious that in spite of the insistence of Fritz, who was standing on tiptoe to get a look at them, he would not let him touch them.

Marie was then cross-examined as to where they had come from but she could only stick to her previous story. At last, prompted by this seeming obstinacy, her father accused her of fibbing and she burst out sobbing.

"Whatever do you want me to say?" she lamented.

Just then the door opened and the Commissioner of Medicine appeared and exclaimed:

"What is the matter now? What are you doing to

my goddaughter to make her weep and sob like that? What is the matter?"

The President told the newcomer all that had happened and ended by showing him the crowns. Scarcely had he seen them when he began to laugh:

"This is a fine joke! These are the seven crowns that I used to wear on my watch chain some years ago and which I gave to Marie on her second birthday. Don't you remember, my friend?"

The President and his wife searched their memories in vain; they could remember nothing about it. However, believing in what the godfather said they gradually calmed down and resumed their customary good-natured expressions. Then Marie summoned up her courage and addressed the Commissioner:

"You know all about it, Godfather Drosselmayer. Confess that Nutcracker is your nephew and that it was he who gave me the seven crowns."

But Godfather Drosselmayer did not take this very well. He knitted his brow and his face fell so that the President beckoned to Marie and took her on his lap.

"Listen, dear child," he said, "I am speaking very strongly now. Do me the favor, once for all, to put aside this silly imagining. If you say again that your ugly and deformed nutcracker is the nephew of our friend the Commissioner I warn you that I shall throw not only your nutcracker but also the dolls, including Mademoiselle Claire, out of the window."

Poor Marie, therefore, thought it best to keep to

herself all the beautiful things which filled her imagination. But boys, and especially girls, will readily understand that when one has once travelled in a country as attractive as the toy kingdom and visited, if only for an hour, as succulent a place as the City of Jam, it is not easy to forget. She tried to talk to Fritz about it but he had lost confidence in her from the moment when she had dared to say that his hussars had taken to flight. Consequently, believing now what his father had implied, that Marie was not telling the truth, Fritz restored to his officers the grades he had taken from them and gave his trumpeters permission to play the March of the Hussars of the Guard. This, however, did not prevent Marie from thinking what she pleased of their courage.

WHEREIN YOUNG DROSSELMAYER FINDS A QUEEN FOR THE TOY KINGDOM

As the years went by Marie lived over and over again all her adventures in the toy kingdom and often revisited in her thoughts the Christmas forest, the river of essence of roses and the City of Jam. She had grown into a charming, rather quiet, young girl so absorbed in her thoughts that people called her a dreamer. One day when she was nearing her sixteenth birthday, the Commissioner, his glass wig on the floor beside him, his tongue out and the sleeves of his long yellow coat turned back,

was repairing a clock with the aid of a long pointed instrument. Marie was seated near the glass cupboard gazing at Nutcracker. Deep in her reverie, forgetting not only Godfather Drosselmayer but her mother who was also there, she suddenly burst out: "Ah, dear Monsieur Drosselmayer, if you were not a wooden man as Father maintains, if you were really alive, I should not like Princess Pirlipate have deserted you if on my account you had lost your good looks; I love you too well!"

Just then she heard such a clatter through the room that she fell from her chair to the ground in a swoon. When she finally came to her senses she was in the arms of her mother who was saying: "How can a big girl like you, I want to know, be silly enough to fall from a chair? Come, dry your eyes; I have some news for you. Godfather Drosselmayer's nephew has just arrived in Nuremberg fresh from his travels abroad and is here at our house in search of his uncle. Look, in the doorway!"

Glancing in that direction Marie saw the Commissioner smiling happily and holding by the hand a young man, rather short, although well built and extremely prepossessing. He was attired in a superb coat of red velvet embroidered in gold, white silk stockings and well-polished shoes. His curled and powdered hair was neatly braided into a queue which hung down his back and he carried a beautiful bouquet of flowers. The small sword at his side was made of precious stones and the hat tucked under his arm was of the finest silk. The pleasing manners of this young man were at once in evidence. Scarcely

had he entered than he placed at Marie's feet a quantity of magnificent things, consisting largely of the most excellent marzipan and bonbons that she had ever eaten, excepting those in the kingdom of the toys.

The Commissioner's nephew had evidently guessed the military tastes of the President's son as he had brought for him a sword of fine steel. This was not all. Later when they were at table and the dessert had been brought in the obliging creature cracked nuts for everyone. None was too hard for him. With his right hand he put it between his teeth, with his left hand he pulled his queue and *crac!* the nut fell in pieces.

Marie had blushed deeply when she first saw this young man and she became still more flustered when after dinner he suggested that they go together into the room where the glass cupboard was. Scarcely were they alone when young Drosselmayer fell on one knee and spoke thus:

"Oh, excellent Mademoiselle Silberhaus, you see here at your feet the happy Drosselmayer whose life you once saved in this very room. You were, moreover, kind enough to say that you would not have sent me away as Princess Pirlipate did, if I had become ugly in your service. The enchantment which the Mouse-Queen threw over me was to lose its power from the day when in spite of my ugly figure I should be loved by a young and beautiful person. Thanks to your kind words, from that moment I ceased to be a stupid nutcracker and resumed my original appearance which as you can see is not un-



HE CARRIED A CHARMING NOSEGAY

pleasing. If, dear young lady, you still feel the same toward me, I beg the honor of your hand, to share my throne and reign with me over the kingdom of the toys."

Marie gently raised young Drosselmayer up and said to him, "You are kind and good, Monsieur, and as you have, in addition, a wonderful kingdom full of magnificent palaces and jolly subjects, I accept your offer provided my father and mother consent."

The door of the salon had opened a little while before quite without the knowledge of the young people, all engrossed in their own affairs, and the President, his wife and Godfather Drosselmayer now advanced, applauding.

Marie was red as a cherry with excitement but the young man, quite composed, advanced toward the President and his wife. Saluting courteously, he made them a handsome speech asking for Marie's hand. This was graciously accorded him on condition that the marriage should not take place before a year.

Time passed slowly as you can imagine, but finally the momentous day arrived and the prince came back for his bride in a little carriage of mother-of-pearl encrusted with gold and silver. It was drawn by horses no larger than sheep and priceless in value since there were no others like them in the world. He led her to the Marzipan palace where they were married by the house chaplain. Twenty-two thousand little people all covered with pearls, diamonds and other precious stones danced at their wedding.

✓ To this very day Marie is still queen of the beautiful kingdom where one may see everywhere shining Christmas forests, rivers of orange juice and essence of roses, diaphanous palaces of sugar finer than snow and more transparent than ice—in fact, all sorts of magnificent and miraculous things provided one's eyes are good enough to see them.



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